

Matena Minard's interview with Mrs. Helen Simmons

Interview date December 31, 1997

Me: When and where were you born?

Mrs. S: I was born in ... Well, there was Champion and Beacon. Beacon was uptown. I was born in Beacon in the hospital. My Dad and mother were caretakers at the Oliver Mining Company hospital where we lived. The house was connected right to the hospital.

Me: Really?

Mrs. S: Yeah. All we had to do was open the door like you did and we'd be in the waiting room. And we were ALL born there. There were three boys and three girls.

Me: What were their names?

Mrs. S: The names of my brothers and sisters?

Me: Yeah.

Mrs. S: Well, I had an older brother called Samfreid, and the next one was Teddy's father, Theodore. And the youngest one was John Rudolf, he was the baby. And then my sisters were Dagmar, Heighman, and Jean Lefler, and then me. Helen. And I'm the only one that's living. All my sisters, my Mother, Dad, they're all gone. The only one I've got is Teddy, you know, the boy's family.

Dad: What was your father's name?

Mrs. S: My father's name was Peter Arvet Patron. My mother's name was Hilma Marie Modig. And they were born on the Swedish side of Finland. There was a river, the Tornio River. And my mother and father were born on the Swedish side, but they spoke Finnish very fluently. As I did. I could speak it. But I've forgotten some words, you know. You forget, at ninety-nine.

Dad: You haven't used it much lately, huh?

Mrs. S: Oh, I did the other day. There's a little old woman in here. She's old, she had a cane, and she wears a little babushka. And I went up to her, and I said, "How scholl yol e wah oone` listah oo tavoita. That's Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And she looked at me... she didn't know I could speak Finnish... and she had the biggest smile on and she was so happy looking, because I suppose she didn't know anyone Finnish in this building.

(We stopped tape to make sure it was working)

Mrs. S: My voice is a little different; when you're older your voice gets harsher, you sound more funny. You get funny all over sometimes! But anyway, I know what I'm talking about, and I know everything and Teddy does a lot of my business, and I tell her what to do. Y'know I'm alert that way. Nobody can put it over on me.

Dad: How did your mom and dad come to the United States?

Mrs. S: Well, I suppose they heard about the mining, especially in Michigan- Upper Michigan- but they located in Tucett or somewhere in Minnesota. I think my dad came first. He worked for the Oliver Mining Company, 'cause he was a green horn, you know, coming from Sweden, and he worked at the mine, and he got hurt, and the doctor at the hospital was called Dr. Beech. And he said, 'Peter, how would you like to work at the hospital?' They had about well, there were the beds, and they had about eight beds, ten beds, and my mother had to have a girl to help her, you know, make the meals and everything. There were a very awful lot of accidents at that mine, at that time, and there were usually maybe one, two accidents a day. Sometimes, of course, some of them did have to stay, some had broken legs, and my father used to even help the doctor with setting a leg. Or holding a man- they used to pull teeth there too.

Dad: They had to hold down a man when they were pulling teeth, huh?

Mrs. S: Sure! We'd open the door and we'd listen... kids, you know... and we'd be sitting there and there'd be yelling and screaming, we'd close the door so fast! I had an interesting life. I lived in Champion till I came to high school here, and then when we moved here, I didn't go to school after that. I had a chance to work at the style shop. It was very exclusive... nothing like it is now, nothing like it. But there was a Jew and his wife, and they came from Iron Wood. And of course, I speak in Finnish. And the majority of the people from Champion and Ishpeming, there were an awful lot of Finish people. So I worked there until I got married, and I got married in 1920.

Dad: 1920?

Mrs. S: 1920. September 15, 1920.

Dad: You were getting married when my dad was just born in 1919.

Mrs. S: Yeah. I saw your dad at church and your mother, eh? Is that recording OK?

Me: Yeah, its recording pretty good.

Mrs. S: Yeah. And then I got married to Harold Simmons. You knew Harold didn't you?

Dad: I didn't know Harold.

Mrs. S: They were very prominent people in Ishpeming at that time... very prominent. Harold's dad, he had two brothers and they kept a saloon. And one of the bothers died, and of course, Harold's dad took his place. With the other brother; and they kept a saloon until they got... what do you call it... prohabation?

Dad: Do you mean prohibition?

Mrs. S: Yah. And then they changed to the wholesale of tobacco, and candies, and all miscellaneous.

Dad: Is there a building down there named... along where the old railroad tracks used to be? Down by the post office there.

Mrs. S: Um...well, they used to be on Main Street, corner...right across from Buck's.

Dad: Oh, OK, I remember. That's where the store used to be.

Mrs. S: Yah. Then when the dad wasn't feeling very good, he got the boys to go into business with an uncle that was left. And there were three boys. Glen, and Harold, and Clayton. And the boys worked. They were hard workers, very hard workers. And finally Harold wanted to locate in Marquette. He bought a lot there. They're called... well they changed names now, but it used to be called Simmon Brothers. He ran the business in Marquette. And they had beer and wine, and... does that answer your questions?

Me: Yes. Just keep going.

Mrs. S: Keep going? OK. Well, anyway, he ran the business in Marquette. It's still there. When Harold retired, he sold it to his drivers. There were four or three of them, I think. And then since then, they sold it to an out of town person... got a *wonderful* price for it... almost made me sick when I heard it! Because you know, he thought of the guys who worked for him. He said, 'Helen,' because I said, 'Don't sell it to any one around here.' He wouldn't listen. He said, 'They made the money for me Helen. And I appreciate them, so I'm going to sell it to them.' There was a Larson, a Rictor, and a ...what were their names?... oh, a pair of twins. I think they still work for that Simmon's Bothers... it doesn't go by Simmon's Brothers anymore... I think it went by L.R and Anderson but now it's a different name. I worked for the style shop and then I got married, and I settled down. I did work for one year after, 'cause it was kinda hard after Harold sold the business, he took a loan from the bank. And I'll tell you... I was *poor!* They were good guys at working, very good guys, Harold especially. He made money with money, you know, you invest. Now, you couldn't get a load of beer if you didn't have your check with

you. And when he went to get started in the business in Marquette, he bought a lot, and then he wanted to put up the building. And he went to the bank; he knew this guy that worked at the bank. He said, 'Now'...I forget the name of the guy, I knew him too...He said, 'I want to borrow so much money.' And the guy said, 'What are you going to do with all that money?' And Harold said, 'This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to put up a building, and I'm going to locate here, and I'm going to sell beer and wine. And he said, 'You know, Harold, I can't do that myself. We have to have a meeting, with the sheriff and advisor and bank president and vice president.' And the next day, he called Harold, and he said, 'Harold, how much do you want?' Harold was so proud of it. Harold told him, and he said, 'OK, the money's ready for you. Anytime you need it.' And when he put up the building, he was doing so good, that in a few, I think that in a few... well I don't think that it was even a year, and he went to the bank, and he said, 'I'm going to pay you up.' And the guy said, 'You don't want us making any money on you, do you?' And Harold said, 'Nope. No money.'

Dad: People didn't get loans like they do now, did they.

Mrs. S: Yeah. And he was a good businessman. And HE never graduated.

Dad: What grade did you go through?

Mrs. S: I went through ninth. I wouldn't had to go through high school there. All my brothers and sisters graduated. Well, most of them.

Dad: Didn't they have a high school in Champion at the time?

Mrs. S: High school gym?

Dad: No, did they have a high school in Champion?

Mrs. S: Yes. I had a brother who graduated from high school. The oldest one.

Dad: I should let Tena ask the questions.

Me: I'll ask a few. What kind of subjects did you have at the high school?

Mrs. S: What kind of what?

Me: Subjects.

Mrs. S: Subjects? Well we had...I didn't go to high school. I went to high school, yeah, in Champion, but it was, oh, algebra, history, and what was the other...it was almost like 8th grade when you go to the high school in Champion.

Dad: What kind of clothes did you wear when you were going to school?

Mrs. S: Well, I'll tell you. My mother was a wonderful...she was a very domestic woman. She made all our clothes. And you can believe it or not, my youngest sister never had a boughten coat until she came to Ishpeming and went to high school. My mother made them out of old men's overcoats and things. She was very domestic. Like your wife! She made all our clothes and you know, we always had-my mother made us one dress especially for Christmas-and then after Christmas, it would be our everyday dress. We would have to take it off when we came home from school. We couldn't wear that dress. No, no, no, no. Because we had jobs to do in the hospital. We had to keep our rooms clean, everything in our own home, because our mother was always busy. She was like a LP now a day like my mother was. But they had to do all the washing every day. And you know, we only had a pump in the hospital, to pump the water. But there were quite a few wells that way we always had water. And we always had steam heat. Even when it was full of snow. Because the hospital had to be kept warm for the patients. We were lucky that way. And then my mother and dad when they lived there they didn't have to pay any rent. And every week there was a horse-load of soft coal. For the immense furnace that was down in the basement I could remember my dad and us

popping corn down there, and my mother would make fudge and taffy, after supper.

Me: That must have been fun!

Mrs. S: Yeah. It was nice living for that age, because there was an awful lot of poor people in Champion too. They lived in log cabins in Champion. Now that's...it was called Beacon. And I was telling Teddy, there was a post office in Beacon and one in Champion. And we'd go to Champion...no, the Beacon post office and we'd say, 'Is there any mail for Peter Patron?' And they'd say, 'What's the number?' And we'd say, 'Ninety-four.' That was our number. Ninety-four. We had...we didn't have many play things. We had to make our fun. We'd play hide and seek, London Bridge and things like that. They don't even think about things that anymore.

Dad: Did you play outside? Did you ski or anything?

Mrs. S: Oh yes, yes. And we had a big, big icehouse. We didn't have an electric refrigerator, but we had an immense other freezer. And every spring, or when it was beginning to get cold, they'd bring these big chunks of ice in sawdust. We'd have an immense place for that. We had our own ice too, you know because we had to keep the food fresh.

Dad: They must have cut the ice off of lake Michigamme, huh?

Mrs. S: Yeah, I think so.

Me: Were you allowed to have pets since you lived by the hospital?

Mrs. S: Pets? Oh, sure. My brother had a cat called Minnie. He was a... I don't know. My youngest brother used to bring home animals. Sometimes it'd be a pretty dog...we had a pretty dog named Bobby! A shepherd. I don't know where he picked him up, but he must have been a strayed animal, because nobody advertised or said they had lost a dog. And then he brought home a cat. He was called Minnie. Oh, he was fond of animals, my younger brother was. He died when he was eighty. And my

sister died...my oldest sister died when she was eighty-two. And my youngest sister Jean, she died when she was eighty when she died. And my husband Harold, he was eighty when he passed away.

Dad: Do you remember how old your parents were when they passed away?

Mrs. S: Yeah. My dad passed away...he wasn't eighty years old. And neither was my mother.

Dad: I thought you must have come from a family of long living people.

Mrs. S: Yeah. I must have, but I don't know...everybody says, 'You must have had the genes, all the genes. And not given any to the other ones.' But I have hundreds of pictures taken by Kodak and everything you know. But they're old fashion.

Dad: Do you have any pictures of when you were a child?

Mrs. S: No. Ronny's got a picture of my dad and mother...I gave it to him... and my oldest brother and my oldest sister. And I was supposed to be in that picture. And my mother said I cried so hard that they had to take me out of it. So I wasn't in any. See, those days, they had those long, hard...have you ever seen one of those? No? Well, I'm sorry you didn't. And every time there'd be a patient, they'd get their picture taken and they'd give it to my mother. When my father died, my mother, my sister and I, we went up into the attic. And we had an old-fashioned suitcase and it was full of those pictures! We didn't know who they were. There were some of them with beards, and we couldn't tell who they were. There was nothing written on the back. They were all these hard, they were hard. I don't know how they took them. They put that thing over their head, and 'smile!' But, no, I never had a picture of myself. I was a bad girl. Because I cried.

Me: Do you remember the names of your friends when you were young?

Mrs. S: When I was a young girl? Remember the friends? Oh, I think most are passed away. I had a very good friend...well, she was

like a sister to me. You know, we had to have cows to. For milk...and cream. And the extra milk my mother would sell. And this little girl was called Maybelle Marshawn. And she was a very, very good friend of mine. She was an only child. And her father and mother...her father was a ticket agent down at the Champion depot. And her mother worked for Breston's. You know that building...that's the Gothard? She used to work there. That used to be a beautiful store. Used to be two stories, three stories. And her mother worked there. And she was a very good friend of mine. We used to go to each other's parties, and everything. Her dad used to say, 'How's my darling?' and her mother would say, 'Mama's darling and papa's polka dot.' They called the girl...Mama's darling and Papa's polka dot.' I always remember her mother made the best doughnuts. I haven't tasted doughnuts like that...my mother was a good baker too. She made good cinnamon rolls. I have met people at Jubilee, older friends-they're gone now-and they'd say, 'Your mother made the best cinnamon rolls.' And I'd say, 'Yes, she did.' But they're gone. Did you know, I had a lot, a lot of friends. Well, I still do. Look at this!

Dad: Wow that's quite a bunch of Christmas cards.

Mrs. S: Yes. I got 62 Birthday cards. Of course, I don't have any older friends anymore. They're all gone away-all passed away.

Dad: Well it'd be hard to get any older friends at ninety-nine.

Mrs. S: Yeah, yeah. They're all passed away. And I had some very good friends, that's why haven't anybody but Ronald, and he lives in Menominee, and that's too far for him to drive up every weekend and see how I am. He calls me almost every day, he takes good care of me. And he takes care of most of my business. I wouldn't have gotten in here if it weren't for him. I had to sign everything to him. I tried and tried and tried to here for...when Harold passed in 1980, he died, I tried right away to get in, and I put my name in Marquette and Snowberry. Is it Snowberry?

Dad: Yeah

Mrs. S: And I put my name in different places here, just to think I'd have a place to stay. I made up my mind one morning, and I called Ronald and said, 'Ronny, you come up here, I'm going to sell my house, I'm going to put it up for sale.' And he said, 'What?!' And I said, 'Yup. I'm not going to live in it any longer. It's too hard.' You know where I lived, don't you?

Dad: No, I don't

Mrs. S: I've got a picture of it. I *think* I've got a picture of it. Where is it? I don't remember where I put it. Ah, yes, here it is. These are the only things I've got lately. These are Teddy's grandchildren.

Dad: They're cute little girls, aren't they.

Mrs. S: This picture was taken at my eighty-fifth, I think.

Dad: Ninety-fifth.

Mrs. S: Ninety-fifth? Oh, yes. And this is my ninety-eighth. She's bad (indicating to a woman in the picture). There's a woman who goes to Norlight and does old people's hair. She comes here and does mine. She says she's bad.

Dad: Yeah. We were down visiting one day and asked if she was around and they said we shouldn't go visit her.

Mrs. S: They don't know you.

Dad: no.

Mrs. S: This is my nephew down in Santa Fe. And that's the Ambassador to...Czechoslovakia? I don't know.

Dad: Belgian.

Mrs. S: He's traveled all over the world He's retired too. He's a bachelor and he's got lots of money (Laughs). This is my home inside.

Dad and I admire and give compliments

Dad: What street is this on now?

Mrs. S: It's on division. On to Negaunee. And you know who bought this? A dentist. What is his name? I've got a picture of him and his family somewhere.

Me: It's a pretty big house.

Dad: Did you buy this house new?

Mrs. S: No. It was my mother and dad's. And my dad died before my mother, so we made an upstairs apartment for her. With a back entrance and everything. And when she passed away, Harold and I...we rented it out to a couple of engineers first...this is the house right here. And when my mother passed away and I lived there...here's a picture of me...

Dad: Nice!

Mrs. S: (laughing) That's fur coat I got...that isn't the same one I had a few years ago...I don't have that one anymore.

Dad: What kind of fur is that?

Mrs. S: Mink.

Dad: Do you remember what year that was?

Mrs. S: Nooo. But I think that was taken when I was married...I was in my honeymoon. That was the only picture I got. And I had all style shop things on. Except the shoes.

Dad: Where was this?

Mrs. S: So we remodeled it and made it a one family home. But the apartment my mother lived in-she was still living-we had that for company when they came or anything like that. But it was too hard, it had a big, big back yard. Very big, and in the summer you had to have someone come mow and take care of it and park too. There was a big three car garage. And the front was a big one, and the driveway too. I couldn't do it, I had to hire help. And when we stopped the thing, we were heating that place for just me. Paying the electricity, everything for one person. I began to think, 'How silly!' My husband told me, 'The minute I'm gone you're going to sell this house.' I said, 'Harold, I'm going to keep this house for a while.' And I kept it for thirteen years.

Me: Do you remember if there were movie theatres when you were younger?

Mrs. S: No there wasn't. Once in a while, there would be somebody from Ishpeming come up and give a movie in the town hall. But there were no movie places anywhere.

Dad: When you were put there in Beacon did they have any... like a town hall where they'd have regular performances or entertainment or anything?

Mrs. S: Yes, they used to, but we didn't go. My dad was like a layman, too, in the church. We were brought up just like your children. We couldn't miss Sunday School or anything. My dad was very, very strict.

Dad: I assume he was a Lutheran too.

Mrs. S: Yeah. My mother too. And if there was anything we were never able to go.

Dad: Did anyone in your family play a musical instrument?

Mrs. S: Yeah. We used to have one of those... I don't know what they called it...it's like a harp...smaller. I don't know which one played it, but we had it in the house. My father used to play the mouth organ too.

Me: What kind of books did you have when you were growing up?

Mrs. S: Books? For reading? Oh, I wish I could tell you. I had so many books when I moved, some were my father's from the hospital. Doctor books. Because when they moved, they left a lot of that stuff. And oh! I had books. I said to Ronny, 'What am I going to do with all these books?' He said, 'Pack them in a box, the ones you don't want, and I'm going to bring them back to Menominee.' There's a guy... he didn't sell them to him, he gave them to him... and he said, 'He collects books.' So I packed all of them in there... I don't know maybe Fred took a couple of them, there were a lot of books... and Ronny took the family Bible, the big one, you know, the family Bible. And I gave Andrew Carri, from our church, a Bible... a Finish Bible. My mother and father had quite a few bibles. Thick ones, thin ones, every kind. And hymnals and things. I didn't take anything because I didn't know where I was going to live. And I'd have to have a great big book case. I did have one in the den at home, and that was full of bibles and other books. But I don't recall that we had many story books. Maybe a few about Santa Claus and things like that when we believed in Santa Claus. Everything was mostly Finnish. We had to learn a lesson for Sunday School too, and that was part of our reading.

Dad: Was there a church out there in Beacon that you went to?

Mrs. S: Yeah. I'll tell you. There was no church in Beacon, for Finnish people. There was one later, and my father and a bunch of men got together and put up a church. It's still up there, because I ride around there once in a while when I drive.

Dad: Do you know what it's called now or no?

Mrs. S: I don't know what it's called now. I can't remember. But it was a cute little church. And they built it. And it's still up there, because I drove... I drove up till I was about sixty years old. And they sent me a notice in the... my driver's licence was due. And I... see the way you have to park here? That's the way I had to park. And when they plough here, you have to move your car. Dress up and move your car, and then put it back again. Some people say, 'You shouldn't park so close to the building. Your not crippled really.' You know. So I said, 'None

of that for me.' I said, 'I'll get a place to put my car.' And I got a place at Teddy's. They've got a double garage, and there's their car and my car, and then they've got the truck outside. And she...when I want it, I got it. It's there. I buy the gasoline and everything, I pay them for the garage. But I wouldn't think of parking out here. No way, uh-uh. I'm not active enough and there were days when I wasn't up to it.

Dad: Do you remember when you first got a car?

Mrs. S: Sure! Do I! The other night I was laying in bed, and I was thinking, 'First car we had was an overland.

Mrs. S: In Wakashaw, Wisconsin. We had our honeymoon in Wakashaw, Wisconsin. First stop we made was in Iron Mountain.

Dad: Was that on a merry-go-round or something?

Mrs. S: Yeah. It was just kind of...we were riding and we just had to stop. I think there's another picture...Roger took all these. I showed you his picture. Anyway, when my mother died, I said to Harold, 'I think we ought to move into another house.' I said, 'I think we should sell this and move to another home.' We thought it over and he said...well, my mother owned it. That's what, my mother owned it. I said to Harold, 'I don't know if I want to live here anymore. Let's buy a house somewhere else in Ishpeming.' Harold wanted me to move to Marquette, but I wouldn't go, so he said, 'How about buying the house from your mother, and we'll remodel it.' (Rest of conversation is on another page.)

Mrs. S: And it was the cutest little car. It was a closed car. And that was after we were married. But Harold did have a car. He was one of the first guys in Ishpeming to have a car. And then we traded that in, and it seems to me we got a Nash. I can't remember. I've had Nashes, Chevrolets, Fords, and Franklins. Air-cooled Franklin cars. Three...four Cadillacs, brand-new ones. And two old-mobiles that we traded in after. We never kept a car more than three years. But this last car I had was a Ford, the first Ford I had. We had, rather. I kept that...it was new when Harold passed away in 1980. And I kept that for seven years. And it was just like new. Because I just rode it to Marquette and back. That's all. Later on, I had, I don't know,

a couple Buicks, four Cadillacs, a couple olds-mobiles, and that Franklin car. It was a beautiful car. It was air-cooled; it didn't need any water. Oh, it was a beautiful car. We had a car called Moon! I think I have a picture of it somewhere in there, and I'm in front of it. I can't even think of all the cars we had. With all that we spent on cars we could have gotten a Rolls Royce! We could been with out a car all that time. But it's been a good life, an interesting life too.

Dad: What were the streets made out of? Were they all gravel or what?

Mrs. S: The streets? Oh, all gravel, yes. We used to drive to see Dr. Van Riper; he came after Dr. Beech. And he passed away not too long ago, he had a son. I got books on the boy. If you want 'em, read 'em. They're interesting. And Dr. Van Riper, his boy, he had two boys and a girl, and the first boy, the one who was born first, was born the same day as my youngest brother. And Dr...the same night, maybe an hour difference, it's in the book...and he wrote several books, this Dr. Van Riper's boy. He stuttered, and he used to call my mother "eite". That's mother in Finnish. And Dr. Van Riper...no, Dr. Beech...anyhow the superintendent called Thomson, superintendent of the mine. And he had a car. Oh, it was old. It was new then, but it was so old fashion when you think of it. I haven't got a picture of it. But when you put the top off it had, stuff, big, oh, what would you call it...made of heavy, heavy cord or something to hold the top sown and it was attached to the front. And it was open. And when he would go to...they took care of the mining sown in Humboldt, and then down to Van Riper or down to Beacon and, 'You girls want a ride?' Sure we want a ride. Nobody else had a car. We thought it was great!

Dad: When you lived in Beacon, did you come to Ishpeming to do shopping or anything?

Mrs. S: When the mine closed. There was nothing in the hospital. The doctor stayed there for a while, but my father got a job as a night watchman. But I guess my father didn't think it was a very good job to be working at to raise his kids, so we moved to Ishpeming. And he had several jobs to work in the hospitals.

But he was...so in later years, they kept cows, and my father...it's not a nice thing to say...but my father and mother kept such a clean place, that everyone wanted Patron's Milk. And my father sold milk to Dr. Crish and Cleveland-Cliffs fisherman, I could name...

Dad: And is this dairy farm still in Beacon or where?

Mrs. S: Ishpeming! And my father didn't have the cows up there in the summer. He had a pasture someplace up in here, I don't know where it was and they used to come and take a truck and the milk things and milk out here. And then they'd do whatever and oh, it was good milk. It wasn't pasteurize, it was cooled. And then they had it in bottles. And when the bottles would stand, there'd be that much cream in the bottle. I remember going up there and watching the bottles and helping them. That was when nobody else was there except for me.

Me: Immigration is supposed to be our main topic, so I have to ask you a few questions on that. Were there a lot of immigrants around where you lived?

Mrs. S: No. I don't remeber anybody...my mother and dad came to Champion and started to raised a family, and I was one of them. But, no, I don't remember. There was a lot when my mother and dad came to Champion. But, of course, I wasn't born then. And they settled in Ishpeming, Chamion, rather. They were used to the mines. Finland and Sweden had a lot of mines.

Dad: So were your parents Swedish or Finish?

Mrs. S: They could speak Swedish, too, but they kinda lost it after they got in Champion, because there were so many Finish people there. And still are.

Dad: Is Patron a Swedish name?

Mrs. S: I don't know. I don't know what it is. But my sister, my oldest sister, and her husband. They traveled all over. But one year they went to Sweden and Finland. And she tried to get some information about my father. And my mother too. And my father had a brother... he had two brothers. One located in North Dakota on a big farm. And the other was an engineer in Finland or Sweden, I don't know which. He came to the United States to get information about mines or something. But we never saw him because weren't even born. They said...my sister when she went to Helsinki, and she tried to look up my father's name. They said my father's father was something like a judge. I don't know what they call it in Finland. Something like a judge. She met my...she met some relatives of mine, I don't remeber how they were...she said they had dinner, and they had a beautiful home, and all their bathrooms were tiled, genuine tile. But she said, I can't remember if they were mine...that was one of my father's family. It was like if he had a son, and then that was the third generation. But I'm sorry we didn't go. Harold and I made a trip to...my 50th anniversary. We went to England, Sweden, Norway, but we didn't go to Finland. I'm sorry we didn't. And when we thought

of it after, it was too late. We were both not feeling well, especially Harold. But we had a nice time. But I can't remember what relatives they were. In fact, they visited me after that, after my sister had been there.

Dad: When you were living up there in Beacon, did the different nationalities mix together or did they all live separately and did they like each other?

Mrs. S: I'll tell you. My dad and mother lived in Beacon. The doctor lived right across from us. And our neighbors were all...the next door was the Davidson; they kept a store in Palmer, and one in Republic, and one in Ishpeming, and one in Champion or Beacon! The next house was Thompson. He was superintendant of the mine. The next...I can remember them! The next house was Goundy, he worked for M.C. Quinn. He had the biggest merchantile store in Beacon. Then straight up there, there were no Finnish people. We were all in our little circle. Then there was Swede town, French town, Finn town.

Dad: So you were in the kinda better part of town. You were in the higher level of town.

Mrs. S: Yeah. My father and mother...they went to the Finnish church, but it just seem as if the hot spot was kind of in the middle. And then up the street...I can remember roller skating when we got side-walks...but we had gravel; everything with gravel, roads and everything.

Dad: What were the sidewalks made out of?

Mrs. S: Wooden.

Dad: They were boards?

Mrs. S: Boards, yeah. And we used to in the winter time we had bobsleighs, we'd start right from the hospital that would go right downtown, cause it was a hill, you know, an incline. Oh, we used to have lots of fun. We'd ski-ride, I could snow-shoe, even to our

camp! Well, maybe, say 50 years ago. When it was winter, Harold and I used to go out there for a while when it was mild. Then you could drive your car out to Republic and then we'd stop where we had to stop and then we'd snow-shoe in. I remember, one time I had to go to the toilet, and we didn't have a toilet at our camp; we had to go outside. And I didn't know how to take those snowshoes off!

Dad: That would make it hard!

Mrs. S: Yeah. I had a hard time, I'll tell you! We used to have lots of fun. We *need* our fun. I remember when we were kids, we used to dress warm. My mother would always have thick woolen underwear and long stockings. And mostly they'd knit the stockings. And we'd dress real warm, and we'd go out and play in the yard. We had a big yard, and we'd make a snowman and we'd go this way and then we'd go this way and play, and we had to make our fun. There wasn't anything you needed to go to. We had a telephone, but we didn't have things like the kids do now, you know. Oh, they're not satisfied. It makes me sick sometimes when I see the kids. And we were growing up without hardly any of that stuff, you know, we had to make our fun.

Dad: Tena's gotta switch tapes here. It's almost running out.

Mrs. S: She taped the best parts of those. (laughing) You know, Pastor Jackson used to come to my house a lot. And we met Pastor Knutson in the store, and he comes here often. 'When are you coming up?' I asked him. He said, 'When do you want me?' I said, 'You can come up any time.' But he's got company, doesn't he?

Dad: Oh, yeah, his daughter.

Mrs. S: She's adopted. What a wonderful thing that is. He's a wonderful man. Don't you like him?

Dad: I do, yes.

Mrs. S: I'll tell you, that man...(Tape ends, and so we take a break and Mrs. S and Dad continue discussing things about church.)

Mrs. S: (Still talking about Pastor Knutson) Some people say they don't like him. What is it that they don't like? But you can't please everybody.

Dad: He said that if he talks the truth about in the bible, some people like it and some aren't going to like it. But you can't please everybody.

Mrs. S: That's what my mother and dad thought. They were true believers. They were very good apostolic people. And I don't know, I don't think my brothers were so much, and Ronny belongs to a church in Menominee. In fact, when he first went there, and he was married, he directed the choir and everything at their church. I don't know, it's not a Missouri Synod, it's strict though. He says they've got a very good minister, there now, a young fellow; very, very good. But he goes to church when he gets a chance. Sometimes he's very late coming home, and he sleeps late on Sunday. But he's good, and his kids have been confirmed and raised. After they get married, they change. You'll find that out. Maybe (Laughing). With your son-in-laws, eh? You have some beautiful girls.

Dad: What kind of questions you got, Tena?

Me: Food questions. What were some of the more common dishes?

Mrs. S: Around our house?

Me: Yeah.

Mrs. S: Well, you know, you know how kids are. My favorite was pea soup, pancakes, and pork 'n beans. My mother made everything. Everything. I don't recall my mother ever had anything stored in our house, unless she ran out of something, like bread or things like that. But my mother, well, we had the common breakfast. But it wasn't cereal. We had to cook your cereal. There was a lot

of oatmeal and cream of wheat. And for lunch, well, we just lived from here to that car; from the school.

Dad: Oh, so it was just a couple hundred feet.

Mrs. S: Yeah. And we'd go home for lunch. My mother always had a good lunch; we always had to sit at the table. We couldn't sit anywhere else to have anything. And then for supper we'd have a big supper. We'd have meat and potatoes, and pork 'n beans; we loved them! And she was a good cook. Whatever she made always tasted good. I've tried different things, but they don't taste like my mother's. Well anyway...what was I going to say...yeah, there were three girls in the family. One had to do the breakfast dishes before she went to school. One had to do the dinner dishes-the lunch dishes. And the other had to do the supper dishes. We had our jobs. On Saturday, we had to clean our rooms, and then my mother would have a great big bushel basket of carpet rags, and we'd sew them together. The come in strips, and you'd sew them together to make carpets. We'd probably get a nickel for it, and we'd run downtown and buy a, they used to call them peter-peters, a little chocolate bar for a nickel. And that's what we had to do. We had to work, and I'm not sorry. I knew what to do, I *think* I kept a good house, and was a good house keeper, and I think my sisters were too. We had to learn...we had to do those dishes before too late, because my mother had jobs to do. She probably had to go clean a room in the hospital.

Dad: Did you do a lot of canning and stuff for fruit and vegetables?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes. My mother did. We used to go picking berries; strawberries. And you know how long it took to fill a pail? All those little tiny berries(Wild strawberries are very, very tiny). And we'd take the train, at the Northwestern depot in Beacon. And ride to Humboldt, and pick blueberries. And we thought that was great, you know; we got to ride on a train! And oh! the blueberries were so plentiful! We'd have bushel baskets of blueberries! My mother would always have plenty...we had a garden.

Dad: What kind of things did you grow in the garden? Potatoes?

Mrs. S: Yeah, and beets, I remember beets. And carrots, I remember.

Dad: Did you grow any kind of green vegetables? Like do you remember beans?

Mrs. S: Oh yes, lettuce, yeah.

Dad: Did you have broccoli and beans too?

Mrs. S: Yeah, but not broccoli.

Dad: Did you have apples? Did you get them from the wild trees or where?

Mrs. S: Oh, yeah, we had apples; my mother and dad used to go to Ishpeming, and they...we'd have a barrel of apples on our basement. We had a big, big basement, as you can imagine. That Champion...have you ever been up to Beacon to see that hospital before it was torn down? It's torn down now. And you could believe it or not, we'd buy bunches of bananas, and we'd hang them down in the basement, so then we'd have fruit. That's one thing. Apples and bananas, I can remember.

Dad: They had bananas way back then, huh?

Mrs. S: Yeah. Oh, yes. And there was that M.C. store. Mr. Quinn from Negaunee, kept it. M.C. Quinn. We used to call him 'miser cheater Quinn'. He sold everything. He had a butcher shop, if you wanted a pair of kid gloves you could get them. He sold everything in that store that you could think of. And he'd drive every morning up to Champion, and drive back at night, back the next morning.

Dad: The road was good enough that people were driving back and forth? I thought maybe he had to take the train or something.

Mrs. S: No, he drove.

Dad: What year would this've been kind of when you were Tena's age?

Mrs. S: When we left, my youngest brother was in the first grade when we moved. And he died in 1980. And when we moved, he was going in to first grade. So what would that be? I tried to figure it out.

Dad: How old was he when he died?

Mrs. S: When he died? 80.

Dad: And he died in 1980, which means he was born in 1900, and then he must have been about 6 in first grade, which means it would have been in 1906.

Mrs. S: He cried! See, Dr. Van Riper's boy was the same age, Cully. And they both cried, they were so lonesome for one another, because they were like twins. I got...Cully VanRiper, he stuttered. And he overcame that stuttering and he traveled, even in Europe, all over, in foreign countries, and telling them how he overcame that. And he got to be, I don't what he was, at the Kalamazoo College. But he was very bright, and he wrote several books. But he doesn't call it Beacon, he calls it, um... he's got a different name for it. And the same as my mother's name. He calls her Hilma. I think he got my father's name right though, Peter. My father's name was Peter; Peter Arvett.

Dad: Did you...so you met Dr. Van Riper when he came up here. Do you remember him?

Mrs. S: Yes. And his wife. Oh, she was...she had life in her when she came. She was the only child. She was brought up very, very wealthy. She was used to horseback riding. She had her own horse, and her riding habits, and everything. And when she come to a little town like Champion, the only people she associated with was Thompsons. They were originally from here, Ishpeming. I think his wife was called White. And that pretty house, the one across the street, that stone house? That used was called Aunt Lizzie's. And she was related to Captain Thompson. And his wife was called Johnston. And she kept teachers. She boarded them. But she was wealthy, I think. That

woman. House sold for \$99,000. That's a nice outfit. Beautiful, beautiful home. I haven't been in it, but they say it's beautiful. Every time my nephew comes from Santa Fe, he says, 'That's the house I'd like.' And I say, 'You could buy it, and then we'd be neighbors.'

Dad: Is it for sale?

Mrs. S: Yeah. I think I've got pictures of my youngest brother and... (getting up) this is the hard part when I'm in church, too.

Dad: Getting up

Mrs. S: Yeah.

Dad: Seems like a lot of the stuff we hear about the old days had a lot of diseases and epidemics. Do you remember any real bad epidemics?

Mrs. S: Yes. Well, I don't know, there was the measles or scarlet fever or something. We were confined to bed, and we had to sleep in a dark room. I don't know...it might have been the measles, but I think it was scarlet fever. We had to sleep in a dark room and no one was allowed to come in; you know.

Dad: I wonder what that was.

Mrs. S: I don't know.

Dad: Do you remember any young people, or ANY people who died from that?

Mrs. S: Oh, they had the flu too. They had the flu epidemic too. But we were lucky. We didn't have it. My mother gave us sulphur. It tasted horrible!

Dad: She kept a clean house, so maybe that helped.

Mrs. S: Yeah. Very careful. You know, yeah. What else now?

Dad: She's got questions like did your family own a horse when you were growing up?

Mrs. S: We sure did! We had surrey with a fringe on top! My father had a horse, it was called Blackie. And we had a two-seater surrey. And every Sunday after Sunday school, and we had our dinner, we'd go for a ride. We even rode to Humboldt with horse. And that was kinda far for the horse. With a surrey on top. Oh, I wish...we had pictures of it, but I haven't got any pictures. I was a young kid and I never thought of it. Well, I don't know if anyone had a Kodak, to tell you the truth. Unless you were the guy who took the pictures.

Dad: Probably not

Mrs. S: But we had a surrey, and a horse named Blackie.

Dad: So what'd you do in the winter time?

Mrs. S: Oh, we had a barn in the back, and chickens.

Dad: Did you have some kind of sled or a cutter?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes, we had a cutter. My mother and father when there was a good preacher in Humboldt, my father and mother would bundle up and they'd take that cutter with the horse...I remember, when we were kids we were kinda scared of the hospital a lot of times; you know, being left alone. But I can remember that. They'd come home, late at night and my father had big thick robes, you know, they were like fur. But we had a cutter too. But, you know, in the back of the hospital, it was all woods! We had a barn, we had chickens, we had a pig, we had a horse, we had everything you could think of.

Dad: Did you just raise the pig for meat?

Mrs. S: Yeah. I can remember a man coming and butchering him.

Dad: And then you'd just raise another one?

Mrs. S: Yeah. And then we'd...we had a special house for that. It was called a wash house. But in the winter, that was where they put the pig and the meat and everything. And when it got warm, we had a refrigerator.

Dad: I can remember my dad talking about, they used to go out and shoot deer and they would just hang the deer out in the wood shed. And my grandma would go out and saw off a hunk of meat when she needed it, and bring it back in the house to cook it.

Mrs. S: We never had deer meat. But rabbits! There was a man who used to keep rabbits. And he used to come to our house and he asked... he knew my mother good...and he said, 'Hilma,' the guy calls her Hilda, 'would you like a rabbit today?' Oh, my mother would cook it...you know about the rabbit...and we'd say, 'Oh, was that meat pie good!' And it was rabbit!

Dad: Rabbit's good. Lot of people like rabbit.

Mrs. S: Oh, and the way they fixed it! You would never know it was rabbit.

Dad: So your father he wasn't a hunter or a fisherman?

Mrs. S: No, he wasn't. None of my brothers were hunters.

Dad: Was he a fisherman? No?

Mrs. S: No.

Dad: Did he come from a farming family or something?

Mrs. S: I don't know. I don't think so, coming from Finland. But I don't know that my father ever went fishing. They were too busy, raising a family, and then being in the hospital. My father had to be out on call all the time in case there was an accident in the hospital. You know, we had a guest room, and when there was...we didn't have a special minister. We used to have these traveling ministers, and every minister that came to Beacon, my mother would have them at our

house. And we had a guest room, called 'viefus' room. That's guest room in Finnish. And we were not allowed to go in there, because when the minister, whenever he came, that was where he slept. And my mother fussed with the minister too. She was very friendly...we were a friendly, friendly home. We always...my mother used to say, 'Everybody's welcome.' They say down here... I say, 'Come and see me!' Hardly anybody comes to see me. I've had some friends come, and knock at the door, but I haven't heard them. And they say, 'You were up there?' And I say, 'I'm sorry, but next time call and I'll have the door open for you.'

Mrs. S: Now what else?

Dad: Oh, I don't know. Do you have any other questions, Tena, about every day life?

Tena: I'll have to see...

Mrs. S: I was raised in a good family, and I didn't have any education, but ninth grade. But I still had a good job, held it, a good marriage. That's all I can say. I had lots of friends, lots and lots of friends.

Dad: Oh, let's see. We asked a little about clothes and things. And the shoes; did you buy the shoes and stuff?

Mrs. S: Now, that's a good question. My father was a shoe-maker too! In between times. There's a song I used to sing, 'There's a wee little man in a wee little house, who's little, little house you see. And he sews all day and all the rest, making shoes for you and me.' And we'd say that...my father had a shoe-maker place. And he had all the equipment, the stand where he shaped the shoe; I don't know where they went to. But we took them; I think we took them, from Champion. But I suppose maybe the boys took them and sold them; I don't know. And we used to visit him. Sometimes he wouldn't come home for dinner. And we would...this was in between time when it wasn't very busy. And he'd have time, and we'd take his lunch there. We'd watch my father... and they used to hold the tacks in their mouths, and then he would pound...

Dad: Where did he work at?

Mrs. S: Huh?

Dad: Where did he make the shoes at?

Mrs. S: He didn't make the shoes...well, he didn't make shoes, but they were like moccasins. Yeah, they were like moccasins, more like. But he fixed shoes too.

Dad: Oh, he fixed them.

Mrs. S: Yeah. He was a good man; a man of all trades, a master of everything. (Laughing)

Dad: So did he do that right in the house where you lived, or...?

Mrs. S: He had a little place uptown in Beacon. He had a little place. I think it was only one room, and I kinda remember, he had all kinds of leather and stuff around. He'd sew shoes free, you know.

Dad: Did people have to have their shoes resoled a lot?

Mrs. S: Yes. Oh, yes.

Dad: Because now days if you wear out the sole you throw them away.

Mrs. S: Yeah, that's right. It's a good thing we had a shoemaker. People used to have large families up there. Have you grown? How old are you?

Me: Thirteen.

Mrs. S: Thirteen?

Dad: She's still kinda short.

Mrs. S: Oh, she's a nice girl.

Dad: She's not one of the taller ones in her class.

Mrs. S: Oh, well...maybe you will. You might take after your dad. You know you don't stop growing until you're, how old? Eighteen? Well, my nephew came here, and I looked at him, he almost reached the ceiling, and he's only 15. Ooh, is he big. But handsome. Now what?

Dad: Did girls wear pants?

Mrs. S: No. We had...I'll tell you what we had to wear, we were even your age (looks at me). Well, not quite. Maybe a couple years younger. We wore knit petticoats, like these afghans. My mother would make... and we wore woolen stockings that my mother knit, about up to here (above the knee) and we had woolen underwear. I can remember, when we used to take our baths there was one set that was wooly, wooly and made you itch.

And the girls; one of us had to wear it, of the girls. And we'd say, 'We don't want to wear it, we don't want to wear it!' And one of us had to wear it. Take turns, you know, it was a wooly one. And wool it makes you itch, your skin. And...dresses. We...everything was home-made. Everything. And they... you know, they used to make them out of, you used to get your flour in flour sacks, a lot of the people had to make them out of there. But my mother used to come to Ishpeming, I remember when I was a little girl, almost every week to shop. I think she took the train, and came; I can remember there was a little candy shop out on Cleveland Avenue, and she'd buy a couple little boxes of...what they call 'em...these, they're little things that...oh, I can't think of them. She'd buy a couple boxes of them...now they come loose. You can buy them loose. They're like candy. They're not sweet on top, but they're sweet in between...Nabiscos! And she'd...they come in little boxes, tin boxes. And she'd always buy a couple of those to bring. And then if we were good girls we could have one. Once in a while.

Me: Were things very expensive?

Mrs. S: Oh, everything was so cheap. When Harold...when we first got married, Harold's father bought a little store out in West Ishpeming. A guy died, and he owed Harold's father money. So Harold... Mr. Simmons took it over, and he wanted Harold to run it! Now this is true, when we were first married. Harold took it over, and he used to take orders from my mother and Myrtle Richard's mother, relatives. And I had a book, until I moved, I don't know where it's to. Where eggs, and butter, and canned fruit, and things were so reasonable! 50 and 20 cents, 10 cents. And Harold had that store, and he kept it and that's when the prices were like that when we were first married, in 1920. In 1921. And you know how he delivered those? He didn't have a car at that time. I was a little bit older than Harold, I was 21 and he was 20. And he had a big sleigh, and he walked, from Main Street up... he lived up on top of the ware-house or the whole-sale on Main Street. It's right across Bucks. It's sold now to somebody, and Chuckey's got a store on West Ishpeming Road. Simmon Brothers? That's a nephew. And he had all that money stole on him, you know. That I can't understand either. Well,

anyway he'd load all that stuff on, pull it from West Ishpeming to where we lived and wherever he delivered that and those groceries. And he kept that up for quite a while longer. But that's what he did when we were first married. And when he was a kid, oh, I used to love this story. He was going to high school, and he cleaned Dr. Burke's livery barn. He kept horses. And he'd shovel all the dirt out, and run home and change, and run to high school. He got 25 cents a day. Now, you can believe that or not. He was so proud to say about that. Because now a days, you know how kids are. You give them a quarter and they look at you.

Dad: 25 cents was a lot back then. You could buy a lot of stuff with that.

Mrs. S: Yeah. He said, 'You know Helen, I saved enough money that I went to Comp's store. That's where the, uh, the book store, the religion store is now. Dow on Main Street.

Dad: Ezekiel?

Mrs. S: Yeah. That was Comp's store. He sold nothing but men's stuff. And he bought his first suit.

Dad: Oh yeah?

Mrs. S: Yeah. He worked hard. I know a lot of people say...they say; they don't know *how* he made his money. Because he *WORKED* so hard. He wasn't like Sam Cahodas. Do you know who Sam Cahodas...?

Dad: I never saw him, but I knew who he was.

Mrs. S: I knew him well, real well. And that's the way Sam started. He started, and his wife. His wife wore a little apron like her slacks are made of (I was wearing blue jeans). And worked in a little food store. When they first came here. I don't know what he made. And he's the one, that taught Paul Argall. Gave him lots of information. And that's how that guy got started.

Dad: He does pretty good.

Mrs. S: Yeah. That's how Harold worked. He *worked* for his money. He never got anything for nothing. He used to go down to the ware-house at five o'clock and plow. He always had a jeep, with a plow. He'd go down there and plow. And so when the guys came and took their trucks out to deliver or to go out, they wouldn't have to do anything. They had a nice big room where they could lounge when they come in from the ware-house, and a wash-room and everything. Harold would stay in there, and would sometimes even wash the trucks. He wouldn't expect his boys to do that. He worked for his money. And I'll tell you, he was proud of it, too. He would repeat it all the time. I'd say, 'I've heard that story so many times, don't tell me anymore!' But he was a good guy. He was a good guy, he was a wonderful father... husband, rather. And when we took Ronny, that was Teddy's brother ...oldest brother. When he was about two and a half years old. And we took him, and we taught him to be an obedient child, and we put him through Northern, and then he went down to Ann Arbor and got his Master's. Then we got him a car, and he went to Northern for four years for music. And I gave him musics lesson when he was only three years old. Piano lessons. What a pity I didn't learn to play the violin and every musical instrument, you know, and then you teach at school. But he worked hard too!

Mrs. S: ...You'll just take the bad parts off then, eh? I hope you get a good mark on it. You'll tell me, eh?

Me: I'm sure I will. And I'll tell you.

Mrs. S: What grade are you in?

Me: 8th

Mrs. S: 8th? Oh. I think I asked you before. Well that was interesting.

Dad: Yeah. Well, I got a few more questions for you. Do you remember World War 1?

Mrs. S: Yes.

Dad: What was it like for you here?

Mrs. S: Oh, that was another thing. One of Teddy's brothers girls came up. I think she's a junior now. And she asked me that same question. I don't even remember that we had anything real hard. I suppose the business probably wasn't that good, you know. At that time. That was in nineteen what?

Dad: Probably around 1918.

Mrs. S: 18, something like that. And, but I don't remember really, that it made; I think there was a shortage of meat or something.

Dad: Nothing severe though, huh?

Mrs. S: I don't remember. Wasn't there a gasoline shortage one time?

Dad: Probably. World War 2, though, it probably would have been.

Mrs. S: It didn't make much difference. I didn't see much difference.

Dad: How about, since you were kinda in business, how about the Depression? Did that make a lot of difference?

Mrs. S: Oh, I imagine it would. Yeah. I mean, the business Harold was in. But...

Dad: But he never told you if things were going bad?

Mrs. S: No. I didn't know anything about that. And with the business here, too, you know, he was disconnected with the business in Ishpeming. Where he sold candies and all different stuff. Well, I suppose it was pretty good, I would say. But I didn't notice that it was much different. No, I don't think so.

Dad: Anything else. (Scans my questions)

Mrs. S: Anything else? Then you could tell them, 'She was ninety-nine years old, and she told us a lot of things we didn't even ask for.'

Me: When exactly were you born?

Mrs. S: I was born 23 of November. I was born 1898. November the 23. Just call if you can't remember.

Dad: We might think of some more things. Could we come back and ask them?

Mrs. S: Sure, sure! Anytime you want! But that's my life story. You know, I could remember when I was going to school, and the school was so close, you know. And in the winter they had these wire pipes, you know, across, and we had to go in between them to get into the school yard. And I put my tongue on one of those pipes, in the winter time, and couldn't get it off. I can't remember what they did but I oh, I had a sore tongue!

Dad: (laughing) They probably used some water.

Mrs. S: Imagine! It was so cold that I forgot. I think I cired!

Dad: I'll bet you did!

Me: I have one more question to ask you. Mrs. Richards wanted us to ask some of the people who were around longer if they remember some snowstorm in 1930?

Dad: Do you remember a big snowstorm in 1930?

Mrs. S: (nodding) I was living in one of Harold's dad's houses, upstairs. That was when we were first married. See, that was 1920, 1930, ten years. And we only paid 8 dollars a month. He owned a house. Harold's dad owned a couple of houses. And this house, when we lived in the upstairs, it was available. And you know, that snow was *so deep*, in the back of the house; I think I got a picture of it somewhere, you couldn't even see the door where you were going to go in. It was that deep. I can remember. And I remember we were invited somewhere, Harold and I, and we could hardly walk and get there. It was...oh, the snow was deep. Terrible. We don't get snow storms like that. You know, in Beacon and Champion is one of the coldest and they get the most snow of all around here.

Dad: Yeah, they do.

Mrs. S: I can remember that we always had a lot of snow. But it was a good place to raise a family. That's what my mother and dad thought, anyway.

Dad: Did they live in Beacon until they died?

Mrs. S: Yeah. No!

Dad: Oh, they lived in Ishpeming.

Mrs. S: Yeah. And my dad died first. And then we fixed an apartment for her. I told you that. We still have it there. And she lived in her little apartment, and we fixed it up just like she wanted it, with everything, and a little back porch. And now, do you know that; those dentists out at West Ishpeming? There's three, four of them. There's one called Heidelberg.

Dad: Yeah. (Asking me) Is that the one you go to?

Me: Yeah, I think so.

Mrs. S: He bought my house! And they're very friendly with me, and always remembering my birthday with flowers. And I got a card from them for Christmas, and they got a little baby. And she sent me the announcement first, and then I got the Christmas card. I bought a gift, and she thanks me on that card, and they've been...you know, I thought that I had a comfortable house. It wasn't beautiful, but it was nice. All carpeted, every room. Every room except the little apartment, that had carpet, you know, and braided rug in the kitchen. But it was furnished! The refrigerator, and the stove, everything, brand-new. And they bought it. She called it lovely when she came to look at it. And I had a lot of chances to sell it, but I think a lot of them were curious. They just wanted...I told the realator, you know, 'Don't send people like that at my house.' I said, 'They say 'you have a lovely home.' And then they walk out!' They have have no intentions of buying it. Well, this couple came. Karen and Joe, I don't know. And she fell in love with it. But they did an awful lot of remodelling. She did the whole kitchen over again. Of course the cabinets, I don't know what year we had them put in. It was modern, I thought. And cute. I even had a little canopy over my stove. Not a top or anything like they got now. I had it made. I thought it was cute. And it was nice, thick, good linoleum. And the same with the den. There was the door, and there was a radio, television, things like that, telephone. And she said, 'I'm dying to see you.' She had the whole kitchen fixed. And she said, 'Joe and I entertained for Christmas.' Last year, she told me this last year. And I said, 'You did?' 'Yes' she said, 'We had'...I think she said they had fifty couples.

Dad: Wow! Quite a few!

Mrs. S: And you know who catered her? Northwoods! So he's making money.

Dad: Yeah, I guess he is. He's making some off us, anyway.

Mrs. S: Yeah. I said to the realtor, I said don't send anybody who doesn't have any idea...that didn't want to but a house. That was just curious. And then when they came, I got the check right away. They were a lovely couple, a lovely couple. She's gonna have me up there soon. As soon as the holidays are over, I'm going to see how it's changed. I had a circular...I have a picture of my stairway. It's circular, and it was wrought-iron. I had it here, but I forgot to show it to you. It's pretty. It's pretty, because everybody that came never saw one like that around here in Ishpeming, anyway. It's leading from my living room. And it was circular like this. The spokes were wrought-iron, but the railing was wooden.

Me: I think I may have seen one almost like that. I was with my cousins, and I was at somebody's house, I don't know who's house, and they had a railing almost exactly like that.

Mrs. S: Did they?

Me: It was coming from the upstairs down into their living room. I was very impressed.

Mrs. S: I know when we remodeled, it was awful hard to get stuff, it was right after the war. And we had a hard job getting different things, but we finally got it. We had a contractor make it, and every once in a while, he would go out on a binge, he was called Kinonen. He was a local guy, and he was a good carpenter. But every once in a while, he would go out on a binge, and his help would go out on a binge. I don't know how many times I'd go up...they'd be up in the attic sleeping! We had a room up in the attic too, all knotty pine. And that was the boy's room. And they'd be sleeping up there instead of working! And here you're paying them how much for a carpenter! Oh, boy! They won't get any money! I think with what we spent on that I could have had a mansion. But you know, it's the old home. It was hard to leave it, but I made up my mind and I was never sorry. Never. I never felt bad. I thought, well I'm getting old, and I need something that I don't have to worry about anymore.

Dad: It's easier to be here.

Mrs. S: Yeah. Oh, this is nice. The only thing is that it's dusty. I don't know if it's the walls or what it is, but it's very dusty. You've got to dust almost every day. But you got plenty of hot water, and you can turn up your thermostat as high as you want, as low as you want. And you get a nice bedroom, little kitchen, bathroom. That's all you got. It's enough to take care of when you're ninety-nine years old. They can't believe now...I've met people from Champion, today. I met quite a few. And some of them didn't know. I said, 'Where are you from?' When he asked me something about, I don't remember what he said. I said, I'm from Champion! 'You are! What's your name?'(Laughs)

Dad: Well, I think we've got to pack up our toys, Helen.

And so, with that being said, the interview is over. I enjoyed myself immensely, and I wouldn't mind talking to Mrs. Simmons again.