

ME: My name is Christie Gibbons and I'm interviewing Lorraine Palmer at her home in Humboldt. Today's date is Dec. 23, 1996. Our interview will focus on Mrs. Palmer's memories as a student at Champion school.

ME: Please tell me your full name.

MRS.P: Lorraine Dorothy Huotari Palmer

ME: Please give me the month, day, and year of your birth.

MRS.P: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1930

ME: Please tell me where you were born.

MRS.P: Ishpeming

ME: What are your parents' names?

MRS.P: My parents are both deceased... My mother's name was Helen Huotari, she died 3 years ago. My Dad's name was Toivo and he died at the age of 41 in 1948.

ME: Do you have any siblings?

MRS.P: Yes, I'm the oldest of eight. There are 4 boys and 4 girls in our family.

ME: What are their names and ages?

MRS.P: Oh, ages, I don't know about that, but they range from 50-66.

ME: What are their names?

MRS.P: Next to me is Ruth, Ronald, Marilyn, Loyd, Wendell, Kenneth, and Jean. Sister Marilyn Rintamaki lives in the area.

ME: Do you have any children?

MRS.P: Yes, 5.

ME: What are their names and ages?

MRS.P: David, Carol, Michael, Joseph, & Thomas.



ME: Where did you live when you were growing up?

MRS.P: In Humboldt.

ME: Where, and at what age did you first attend school?

MRS.P: I would imagine about 6, cuz we didn't have kindergarten then. At Champion, I attended Champion throughout my school years.

ME: What are your earliest memories of school?

MRS.P: Waiting for the bus in below zero weather. Basically my school years were very enjoyable from what I remember!

ME: What are your funniest memories of school?

MRS.P: Well funniest was probably when I was just out of high school, and I was attending a basketball game, I was an ardent Champion basketball supporter. And I called about 6 fouls before the ref called them. He wasn't very happy with me, but that's one of the funniest things.

ME: How far did you live from school?

MRS.P: About 3 miles.

ME: Did you have to walk at anytime?

MRS.P: NO, not the traditional old, old typers.

ME: Describe a typical day in elementary school.

MRS.P: We'd get up by lamplight, we had outdoor toilets, no telephone, no electricity of course so we didn't have a radio. We'd get up in the morning, and my mother always had coffee, and she made a lot of homemade cinnamon rolls, and I guess we basically had like a cinnamon roll or coffee, or oatmeal or farina or something like that, there wasn't cold cereal like there is today, and waffles. She would make pancakes too. And no pre packages [2]

quote  
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If there were, we couldn't afford it anyway, so.

ME: How many students were in a typical classroom?

MRS.P: about 15. There were 10 in my graduating class.

ME: Do you remember having any childhood diseases or broken bones & stitches?

MRS.P: No broken broken bones or stitches. I've been very fortunate in that respect, but I did have the mumps & measles, and I remember when I had the mumps, it caused me to have weakness in my ears and throat for a while after that. We did live in Champion for a few years, and once I remember I had the measles so bad with a temperature, and I was sleeping, and I was lying on a couch I mean daybed so I wouldn't bother the rest of the family. And I remember seeing, waking up in the middle of the night & seeing a ~~man~~ with a body with a black hat & cape, it probably was hallucinating at such a high temperature.

ME: Were there any remedies for it?

MRS.P: I know at one time, Dr. Van Riper used, I did have pleurisy as a teenager, and Dr. Van Riper I know had sulfo tablets, but basically I think we had aspirin. And of course for colds we always had hot lemon juice, & we had to take that yucky cod liver oil. My aunt sent it from the copper country, and I used to put it in my coffee. Our family was basically pretty healthy, so.

ME: Do you have any recollections of polio? fearing it? having it? or vaccines?



MRS. P.: A fellow that was in my confirmation class, I was 13 when I was confirmed, A fellow by the name of Kenneth Beck from Champion, he was the 1<sup>st</sup> U.P. Polio victim, & he died. I don't remember having injections for it other than when I was having my Rido. Getting back to medicines, what we used to have a lot of times is what we called <sup>SOPS</sup> ~~sopp~~ (z) its warm milk with bread in it, and a little salt & pepper. I didn't fear polio, I have never feared the unknown. I'm not a worrier & that's a God given blessing, because worry is when you're really worried, I get quite concerned about things and people, but I don't fear the unknown.   
 called milk SOPS

ME: Do you remember tuberculosis?

MRS. P.: Yes, My dad's side of the family had several who had T.B. My aunt & uncle died in their early twenties as a result of it, and a cousin of mine died, I think she was only 16. It started with an aunt of mine lived in Montana, and she came to my grandma Huotari's funeral in 1941 and she had a terrible, terrible cold, and unknown to the rest of the family, she had the TB germ, so she came to the funeral, and was coughing she spread it to the rest of the family.   
 include

ME: As a student you remember any other pills or vaccinations you had to take to prevent any illnesses?

MRS. P.: No. I don't remember having any health problems & that's a blessing, I'm not bragging, those are God given gifts as well. [4]



ME: Who was principal while you attended Champion?

MRS.P: Bill Koske Sr.... Incidentally we only had 3 teachers when I was in high school, Bill Koske Sr. was the principal, Eskill Carlson was the superintendant, and Helen <sup>(look at ledgers)</sup> was the business teacher. 4 subjects no choice, (HA, HA) Nosewing, I think we had a choral club for a while, but I'm not sure. But we did have a school newspaper, and class plays.

ME: What did you do at recess?

MRS.P: Oh, man, well played with the rest of the kids in the snow or whatever, jumprope, jacks and hopscotch.

ME: How long was your lunch break?

MRS.P: I believe it was one hour.

ME: What was your favorite subject?

MRS.P: I liked shorthand, but English, I am better in English than anything else, or I was, no I still am. I loved to read. I still do today! And I like music, too!

ME: What grade did you enjoy the most?

MRS.P: Well I enjoyed high school overall, because we had class plays every year, we had basketball, we had a newspaper. By that time you really get to know who your classmates care, and you really get to meld with them.

ME: Who was your favorite teacher?

MRS.P: I don't really know that I had a favorite teacher, but the Feiley sisters were "wonderful" teachers, Miss Dormer was my third grade teacher, In fact I remember all my teachers, Margaret Feiley in first grade, Doris Carlson in second grade, third grade was Louise Dormer, fourth 5



grade was Nelly Feiley, Ida Johnson, fifth, and Lina Pierto  
, sixth. They all were nice people, and as I  
have gotten older, I can respect them even  
more, HA, HA!

ME: Do you remember the most fun activity you  
participated in?

MRS.P: Class plays, we had a lot of fun!

ME: What are some after school or summer  
activities you remember doing?

MRS.P: Well my sister Ruth and I used to make,  
we were always family oriented, take cardboard  
boxes and take wallpaper, and paste the wallpaper  
inside the cardboard boxes and we'd play paper  
dolls. When others came over, we'd play  
kick the can, we'd play hide and seek too, we  
used to have a lot of fun with city relatives  
because we could hide in places in the  
barn where you know trap doors and stuff  
like that. Reading was one of my favorite  
things to do too. Of course we had jobs  
around the house as well.

ME: What kind of food did the school serve for lunch?

MRS.P: Well when I was in school it wasn't good. I don't  
think the hot lunch program came until 1946.  
And in the beginning we only had water with  
a few things of barley in it or something. It was  
yucky, but the cooks did the best they could  
with what they had. The kids nowadays  
have fantastic school lunches, and they complain!

ME: What time did a school day begin and end?

MRS.P: I think it started at 8:30 and we got home at  
3:30, maybe. That's a guess, I don't remember  
exactly.

Interesting!



ME: Did students go on field trips?

MRS.P: There was no such animal at that time. HA!

ME: How old were you when you and your family got their first T.V.?

MRS.P: I was married and had grown children by that time. Basically our faith does it agree with T.V. Let's see, my husband has been dead for 16 years so probably about 20 years.

ME: What about your first radio?

MRS.P: Hmmm... I was married in 1952 so we had one before then so probably 1950. We got electricity when I was a senior in high school in 1948.

ME: Did you have any favorite programs?

MRS.P: My favorite T.V. programs now would be News, and good, clean family stories, I like Dateline + Primetime, they're very informative, and educational. There is so much garbage on T.V. and I get so upset with it, even some of the news now is terrible! I get frustrated when they shove a microphone in your face when your house is burning down and they ask you "Are you gonna rebuild?"

ME: Where did your family do their shopping?

MRS.P: Mike's something store in Champion, I can't think of what it's called. I would go there on my lunch break and get groceries.

ME: Did you and your family go on vacations?

MRS.P: No. We couldn't afford it, we didn't even have a car half the time. After high school, we went on weekend trips with our church group.

ME: How often did you and your family go out for dinner?



MRS. P: Never in high school. Not as a whole family but maybe after a basketball game we would go to a restaurant for a hamburger or something, but money was very, very tight. I started babysitting at 13 years old. I babysat for my mom at times too, like when she washed clothes in the gas washing machine. Now getting back to the radio, I think we may have had a battery operated one. We used to go visit our relatives for a sauna, and listen to WLS on the radio station. (Chicago, station)

ME: As a child, did you cherish any special toys or treasures?

MRS. P: My aunt + uncle gave my sister Ruth and I a doll, I loved it. It had hair on it. And on Christmas one year, to this day I still have it, I got a locket about the size of a half dollar it says, "My heart belongs to daddy." And then one year my Uncle, who dropped dead of a heart attack at 28, gave me a bracelet + one year he gave me a baby ring and those I still have.

ME: After elementary school, how was school arranged in high school?

MRS. P: We had 4 compulsory subjects that was it. We had the school paper, and class plays. And basketball games. We live for basketball games. When I was 13 My Dad, Ruth, and I went to baseball games. We love baseball games as well as basketball.



ME: Did you participate in any high school extra curricular activities?

MRS. P: The only thing we had was the school paper, and I think we had glee club for a while. The school paper + class plays. I was involved in both. They had no band.

ME: Who was a popular singer or group when you were growing up?

MRS. P: The only thing I can remember is as a teenager Alan Mad + Guy Madison were movie actors + I'd see their pictures in magazines and I fell in love with both of them. (HA) I had their pictures for years + years, but as far as music goes, I don't remember.

ME: What's the thing that stands out most in your mind about high school?

MRS. P: It was a very enjoyable time, and these were hard times and most of us had little money, but I really enjoyed it. I have bad feelings about it at all.

ME: What year did you graduate in?

Mrs. P: 1948

ME: As you look back is there something you would change about those years?

MRS. P: NO, I wish we'd had electricity and indoor plumbing, it would have made life so much easier. You learn, when you have hard times, to appreciate and accept people and things for what they are. People are not for what you can get out of them, but what they can do for you as human beings, and My mother with her love + faith for God kept us as a family unit after my dad died. [9]  
She was a very loving woman.

Good Luck



ME: Where did you attend college?

MRS. P.: I was 2 years at Suomi college. I had my associate & commerce degree from there. I graduated from Suomi exactly 20 years after I graduated from high school. That was June 2, 1968. On June 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1968 I started working at Michigan Tech. full time. In the fall of 1968 I started taking classes at Michigan Tech. and I graduated from there with my Liberal Arts degree in November of 1974. I worked in continuing education so I was able to schedule classes with the rest of us in the evening classes. It's a cooperative effort on my families part. They all pitched in.

ME: Do you have any humorous college memories?

MRS. P.: At Suomi we were sitting, on Wednesdays we had Chapel and it was mandated that everyone go unless you had a very good reason. There were 2 ladies sitting in front of me. Remember now I was 38 years old, and we were talking about Chapel and Suomi college, a group of us had gone to Suomi college under this Title 5 training program from President Johnson, some of these programs are wonderful. My husband was a multiple handicap incidentally for many years so I eligible for this program. I was talking to these 2 ladies <sup>about</sup> how wonderful it was to be at Suomi because it was a smaller college and the younger people took us in + we worked together, and ironically I was talking to the president Jockanin's wife and Dean Sturdivant's wife who have who have become very good friends of mine!



Something missing?

Also in school plays we used to monkey around a lot, and yes I could've been a better student. (HA, HA, HA)

ME: What do you think made Champion so

MRS.P: We had a lot of fun at school, and I think the teachers did the best they could with what they had available, the books and supplies + stuff. I'm just very happy that I went to Champion. There was a togetherness there. Whatever you are faced with in life whether it's school, or work, or friends it depends on the attitude you take. I have a positive attitude + I know that's important in life wherever you go. Other people feel better about it than too.

Stoke

Also wherever you go take stock of your blessings. There are always people better off than you, but there are always people who aren't so well off.

ME: How did you feel when the 3 districts consolidated?

MRS.P: I wasn't in the cars at the time, but I feel bad that it had to close, but I understand the reasons. I volunteered in the reunion committee at the school and I do have a Champion sweatshirts and pictures of Champion. There's a time + place for change, and it was evident that it needed to be done.

ME: Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't thought to ask you about?

MRS.P: I had fun writing the class song and then I also wrote the class history, anyway I projected <sup>what</sup> was going to happen 10 years down the road + I made it commical - I'll try to get it to you

ME: THANKS MRS.P: Your welcome.