

Me:

My name is Danielle Pellow. I am interviewing Donald Grund at his house. Today's date is November 2, 1996. We will be talking about his many years at Ely School.

Me: What is your full name?

Mr. G.: Donald Norman Grund

Me: When and where were you born?

Mr. G.: Ishpeming, Michigan. When and where?

Me: yeah

Mr. G.: July 13, 1933

Me: What's your favorite childhood memory?

Mr. G.: (Lightr) favorite childhood memory. That would be way, way back when I was yeh big, ney. I imagine there is all kinds of them but lets see now

Mom: We can come back to that one if you'd like.

Mr. G.: yeah, I think you're gonna have to.

Me: Alright. What schools did you attend?

Mr. G.: Ely school and Ishpeming High school

Me: How many years did you go to school?

Mr. G.: Well, kindergarden through twelveth. I graduated from Ishpeming High School



Me: Describe a typical day as an elementary student.

Mr. G: Typical day as an elementary student. School started at 9 A.M. We had like 5 classes between 9 and 12. There were two grades in each room <sup>1 teacher</sup> each with about 40 or 50 children. We'd go home. We did have hot lunch we'd go home from 12 til 1. Back from 1 til 4. Another about 4, 5 subjects. We had about 10, 11 subjects everyday.

Me: What was recess like?

Mr. G: Just like it is now, a lot of fun. (Laughter) Yep, a lot of fun. Best class of the whole day.

Me: What was lunch like?

Mr. G: We came home and ate. We had a sandwich and a glass of milk.

Me: How did you get to school?

Mr. G: walked

Me: You lived here

Mr. G: lived right in this house for all my years. Then in high school I took the bus. We took the bus from here to Ishpeming for four years



Me: Describe holiday celebrations at school.

Mr. G.: Describe?

Me: Holiday celebrations at school

Mr. G.: Oh yeah. I only recall celebrating Christmas. Oh no, wait a minute then we use to have Columbus Day and um Lincoln's birthday and back then it was called \_\_\_\_\_ Day. We'd have programs, you know the whole school. We use to have a room in the basement called the rumpas room. All the classes would go down there and then, they'd put on a program up on the stage for the kids. But we didn't celebrate Halloween or Thanksgiving, nope. I don't know why.

Me: Did you ever have to miss school for reasons other than being sick and if so why?

Mr. G.: No, I never had to.

Me: What kinds of games did you play as a child?

Mr. G.: Well, the good old hide and go seek and tag. You kids probably don't know about them.

Mom: No they used to play them

Mr. G.: Oh do they. They play them now yet. Hide and go seek.

Me: Nope (Laugh)



Mr. G: She's gonna have to do some erasing (Laughter) No that that was about all. Oh I could name you some other ones but they are so far fetched you'd never.... Run my black sheep run different things like that.

Me: How did you play that game?

Mr. G: I don't remember that one now (Laughter) I just remember the name of it.

Me: How were unruly children handled?

Mr. G: Well, usually put in the corner or in the closet. If you were really bad the teacher would have you put your hands on the desk like this and she came with a wooden ruler (knocking on table) We had a man teacher who would put you, you had to lay on top of your desk and he would come with his hand here and knock, knock, knock on your buttocks. Yeah that's how we were handled.

Me: What would your parents have done if you got into trouble at school?

Mr. G: You never came home and told them I'll tell you that much. You'd been in more trouble. You'd really been in trouble.

Me: Did you behave well in school and....

Mr. G: Of course (Laughter) I was a typical young guy I've gotten into trouble too. I got my share of slaps on the butts and hands on the desk with the ruler. We used to pull off smart ones once in a while. Not very often, not very often (Laughter)



Me: Were your grades average, below average or above average?

Mr. G: I'd say average I'd. I was on the honor roll many times I have newspaper clippings upstairs I should've got them out and showed you. Yeah in the Mining Journal. I have a lot of them. Maybe I was teachers pet.

Me: On the average ~~how~~ how many kids were in a classroom.

Mr. G: Back in grade school there was 40, 30, 40, 50 for 1 teacher. 1 Teacher. No teacher help, no teacher aid, no volunteer parents the teacher taught 40. There'd be like 20 some in the first grade and she'd do a subject with them and 20 come in the second grade they were both in the same room. While she was teaching the second grade their subjects, the first grade was studying for their next subject. you know what I mean. She'd finish that the poor thing never had a break. She had papers piled this high everyday on her desk from the kids. to correct. I mean she used to take them home every night and correct them.

Me: How was your school heated?

Mr. G: Well, first it was coal the janitor had to shovel coal into the big boiler. And steam, radiators.

Me: During the hotter days how was your school cooled?

Mr. G: Open windows. Hoped there was a breeze outside. (Laughter)

Me: How did your family prepare for ~~winter~~ winter days?

Mr. G: Prepare for winter days we used to make a heck of a lot of wood because back in those days you had wood heat in your home. We had a woodstove right here where the table is. We had another one right here in this area. And that's how you heated. So you had to make your firewood like a lot of people still do make firewood.



Me: How did students get into trouble?

Mr. G: How did they get into trouble. Well, basically boys picking on girls. Pulling hair you know. And wintertime now throwing snowballs. Snowball throwing was a favorite. Until you got caught and that was when that teacher used to put you on top of his desk and use his hand. He was the famous one for that. Snowball throwing and typical boy picking on girl.

Me: Do you remember getting into trouble? why and what happened?

Mr. G: (Laughter) Yeah I got in trouble yeah. Throwing snowballs and that's why I got paddled on the buttocks. Another time I got into trouble. She was the Art teacher. The boy sitting on side of me his father and my father were on the school board. We thought we were a little bit smarter than the rest of the kids because our fathers were on the school board. So we got real smart one day and she showed us. She pulled our hair that's why I got the bald spot here. And put our hands on the desk and rat with the ruler. Oh did she. And she kept screaming, just because your fathers are on the school board don't think you're getting away with murder in this classroom. (Laughter) Ooh yeah that was it we got in trouble.

Me: Do you remember diseases in school?

Mr. G: Head lice. Head lice was about all. Oh whopping cough. Kids had a lot of respiratory problems back in those days because we all had this bug. you know. That's about it. It seems like the nurse was there every week with the old comb. yeah a lot of head lice.

Me: Did you go on field trips for school?



Mr. G: Never had a field trip. Never ever had a field trip. Never

Me: Please explain any memorable moments that happened to you during school.

Mr. G: Any memorable moments. I was always picked to be the lead guy in the Christmas program. That probably comes back as the best moment. For some reason I was always the lead man.

Mom: What kind of part did you have?

Mr. G: It was just acting no singing. When we had Christmas programs back in those days the teacher she was a music teacher and it was always a talking type program. ~~Good~~ year we didn't sing at all.

Me: What were the teachers like and who was your most memorable teacher?

Mr. G: My most memorable teacher was the man that used to slap me on the butts. And he was probably the best teacher I ever met in all my years in being involved with school. He was very, very excellent.

Me: Why?

Mr. G: Why. He.. He was the kind of teacher who would sit in his chair like this all day long. Come lunch hour time he wouldn't leave his chair. He would stay there and slow students would sit there and eat their lunch with him. And as they are all eating their sandwiches, apples and so forth, he's teaching them the slow things like math that they were behind on and so forth. That's the kind of teacher he was.



Me: What was your favorite subject and why?

Mr. G: Favorite subject was spelling. Why. Because many times I won a free pencil for (laughter) being the last one standing for the famous spell down. Yeah!

Me: Was there more men or women teachers?

Mr. G: We had 2 men and 3 women. We only had 5 teachers.

Me: What grade did you enjoy the most and why?

Mr. G: What grade did I enjoy the most and why. OK... that would be like the 3<sup>RD</sup> grade. Why. Well because that's when we... when we learned how to behave with this.. this.. this is back in the day with the same man again with the same hand you know. And he used to that's when you learn how to behave in school the way you should be. I mean you... you didn't talk out of turn in his room or you didn't do anything wrong. You just sat there and learned. Like I said, that's when I was on the honor roll 3<sup>RD</sup> and 4<sup>TH</sup> grade with him. He was... He was possibly teaching me. If you wanted to learn that's what he was doing he was teaching you the whole time. So he would be the best.

Me: What's the most fun in school?

Mr. G: What was the most fun in school... probably waiting for recess. (laughter) Well, that's how they are now a days. They just wait for that gym class... well I'm safe. We looked forward to getting outside and we were crowded with 50 kids in a room. I was good to get outside. 15 min. in the ~~mor~~ morning and 15 min. in







Mr. G: birdhouses and ball racks and magazine racks and the girls would have sewing and stuff like that.

Me: What type of ~~chores~~ ~~chores~~ chores did you do after school?

Mr. G: Haul wood. Empty ashes. Shovel snow. Typical chores. We didn't have snowblowers back in them days and stuff you know.

Me: What kinds of hobbies were you involved in?

Mr. G: Very, very few hobbies. You came home from school. By the time you done your chores, and ate a meal and done your homework, Bye, see you tomorrow morning. Time to go to bed. So you went up to bed. And during the weekends we used to spend a lot of time playing. I remember that. Weekends we spent a lot of time playing. These stupid games like Run my Black Sheep run (laughter).

Me: How big was the school like grades and students.

Mr. G: When I was in there it was kindergarden through the eighth grade. And 4 classrooms and a basement rec room and then the basement 4-H room.



Mr. G: Probably 120, 130 students at the most. That's when I was in school there as a student.

Me: What year did you graduate high school?

Mr. G: 1951.

Me: How many were in your graduating class?

Mr. G: The class I graduated with was the largest class in the history of the Ishpeming high school. 150 students. At that time. As years went by they've gotten more. bigger class but at that time we were the biggest class.

Me: On an average, how many drop-out students were there?

Mr. G: On an average, there was lots. Back in those days, a lot of people dropped out of school.

Me: What courses did you take in high school?

Mr. G: The course I graduated was called the Genuine course it was you had your science and you had your foreign language and you had your physics. A general course.



Me: Were you alive during World War II?

Mr.G: Oh yeah!

Me: What was it like?

Mr.G: I don't remember the war.

Mom: How old were you?

Mr.G: Well that was 1941. 8 years old. I was 8, 9, 10 years old

Mom: And it didn't affect you?

Mr.G: I don't know. I don't remember a darn thing about the war. Oh I remember things but it didn't affect me in any way, shape or form.

Me: Describe the kids behavior. (phone rings)

Mr.G: Oh I remember gas was rationed. You were only allowed 30 gallons a week. You had like food stamps. Meat stamps. You were only allowed 30 lbs of meat. I remember things like that. Clothing was very, very scarce. I remember... I think I had only two pair of pants. Overalls were never known of back in those days. We had like ~~casual~~<sup>dressy</sup> type pants. I remember that part of it. Yeah.

Me: Describe the kids ~~behavior~~ behavior when you started working.



Mr. G: When I started working, kids were well behaved. Well behaved.

Me: During school, how were unruly kids handled? while working.

Mr. G: Well, when I first started working they... they were punished. They used to have to write 50 times I won't do this, I won't do that. Stuff like that. They were still put in corners back in them days when I started.

Mom: Were they hit?

Mr. G: We had one teacher who did like to slap kids. I didn't think much of it but it was none of my business, because I was just a janitor. He used to take his foot and sidewise it into the butts. You know he used to grab them by the hair and give them a good kick in the butt. I didn't think it was very nice. Kids that he done that to they never done any wrong a second time. That much I know (laughter) They thought before they done any wrong. Yeah it was effective.

Me: Do you have any funny moments that happened to you at Ely and if so please explain what happened.



Mr.G: Funny moments. We could sit here for two days (laughter)  
I'll give you a funny one. I was up... we  
are talking about me being a costodian right?

Me: yeah

Mr.G: I used to go on the gym roof to get the balls  
for the kids. That's ~~was~~ way up off of a  
high ladder. And I put the ladder up on the roof  
and went up. And as I'm up there retrieving  
these lost balls and stuff, the wind came up  
and took the ladder (laughter). So here little old  
Donny is up on the big gym roof. 34 ft up  
from the bottom you know from the ground. The  
neighbor maybe on the corner heard me hollering  
and hollering. So she called the school. The  
principal came out and looks up and says  
you have a problem? I said yeah I think  
I'm kinda stranded up ~~near~~ here. He said  
good place for you. ~~So~~ He said you have  
no business going up there by yourself. In  
case of the wind like it happened that  
day he said. He went back in the school  
and left me out there for about 15 minutes,  
or so just to aggravate me. Then he came  
out, put the ladder up. And I came down  
very red faced (laughter). That's just one I could  
go on for numerous stories.



Me: What was the saddest thing that happened to you while working?

Mr. G: Saddest day. Oh I'd say the day Mr. Kennedy was shot. President Kennedy. We had about 220 kids in the building at that time. There was some construction going on at that time. The hall ~~so~~ was loaded with kids on ~~there~~ their hands and he's praying. I knelt down with him and joined him. It was a very, very sad time. That's the only sad time. I was always laughing and joking. That was very sad.

Me: What kind of work did you do at Ely?

Mr. G: Janitor. That's cleaning classrooms and . . . .

Me: What was your favorite duty and why?

Mr. G: Being a bus driver. Being with the kids that's why. I ~~love~~ love kids, I miss them so much it's unreal. I really love kids.

Me: What job did you do the most as a custodian?

Mr. G: Sweeping floors. My all-time unfavorite ~~e~~ job.

Me: Please describe the changes that have occurred in the Ely school throughout your years working.



Mr. G: Changes that occurred. Well lets see. We consolidated. We lost our ~~pre~~ junior high kids They got sent up to Champion. I was glad to see that happen because they can be touchy at times. Not the girls as much as the boys. Just a lot of changes. A lot of new people. A lot of new employees, teachers. There has always been changes. From the day I was there, we probably didn't go for two years at a time with the same teacher, or non-teaching people. For quite a few years. Then we went for quite a few years with the same people working and then teachers got better jobs and more money. Then there were all kinds of new faces, yeah a lot of changes like that.

Me: When you look back at the years you spent at Ely what do you think is special about that school?

Mr. G: What do I think is special about that school. Well, the special thing is that it was<sup>e</sup> off the highways out into the... they always say we were out in the woods. I think that's a good place to put a building. Off the darn highways with all the traffic and mess and stuff. I think that was one of the best things about the Ely School.



Mr. G: We were out of the way you know what I mean. It wasn't that far for buses to come into. Kids always enjoyed it out here at Ely. Very few kids told me they didn't enjoy being out here at Ely.

Me: What was it like driving a bus?

Mr. G: Great. You sit in a bus and drive. It's like ~~driving~~ driving a car and pretending you have 5 cars behind you, yeah. Had to slap the kids around once in a while (laughter).

Me: How were misbehaved kids on the bus handled?

Mr. G: I used to handle them myself. Mostly by putting them in the front seat with me. Kids never liked to sit behind the bus driver that much. I used to stop the bus, put the brakes on, pull off the road, stop the bus, get out of my ~~seat~~ seat and go put my ~~hand~~ hand here around the collar and march them up to the front. You sit by ~~Donny~~ Donny now for a week. And they'd shape up. That's how I used to punish them. I think I turned in one kid to the principal at Ely. I believed in a bus driver taking care of his own problems. Kids weren't usually a problem on my bus. Like Chelsea ask her. She'll tell you how good the kids were.



Me: What is the difference between the buses now and the buses you drove when you ~~for~~ first started?

Mr. G: Well, buses now are much warmer, safer, easier to drive for the driver, better seats for the kids. They improved all around.

Me: How many kids were on a bus?

Mr. G: I used to have. Well when I first started driving a bus I had 72. I'd leave Diorite school. Go down to Clarksburg. Go down the highway, and so forth. By the time I got to Ishpeming High School I had 72 high school kids. You know how big they are, on one bus, we used to put boards in the back, 3 seats, so you would make a big seat which was violation of the law. But that's the only way I'd have room for all these kids. 72 of them.

Me: How many custodians work with you?

Mr. G: Oh many.

Me: Did you make any good friends from work?



Mr. G: Oh yeah. ~~There~~ Tons of friends.

Me: What were their names?

Mr. G: Oh do I have have to go through all of them (Laughter)

Me: You can just name a few of them.

Mr. G: Warren Munson principal. He and I were the best of friends. Ray Sandretta, do you know her daughter Angela Sandretta that great runner?

Me: Oh yeah.

Mr. G: Her and I... she was a teacher aid over here and we were the best of pals, There's just all kinds of them. Karen Perry our secretary. I could just keep going on. I've gone through... I don't know how many people. Maybe I should of thought of that. Employees from 1951 til now I've probably gone through a few hundred.

Me: How many years did you work at Ely?

Mr. G: 44 years and 9 months. Right to the day.

Me: Did you have any favorite students?



Mr. G: I think its wrong for bus drivers and teachers to have pets but we all do, I had mine.

Mom: you just get along with others better.

Mr. G: yeah you do. I used to give candy out for Halloween, Christmas and Easter. And my favorite pet, Chelsea is probably one of them, I'd give her two candies instead of just the one, that I usually gave. So I had my share of pets, yeah thats normal.

Me: How old were you when you started?

Mr. G: 19. 19 years old.

Me: How much did you get paid?

Mr. G: Oh... \$2,400 a year. Thats \$200 a month, we got paid once a month. The first day of every month was payday. We had to make that \$200 stretch for 30 days. That was back in the good old days.

Me: Now that you don't work anymore, what do you do in your spare time?



Mr. G: I wish you could tell me what to do in my spare time. I'm having a rough time ~~of~~ adjusting to retirement. I really am. I have a camp in Gwinn that I don't go to anymore. You close it down once winter starts. I used to spend time out there. And you saw my big dog. Well, that ~~is~~ takes care of a few hours everyday. I like to bum around. Go to Marquette. Go to the malls and stuff.

Me: Did you want to retire?

Mr. G: No, No. No way. Didn't want to at all.

Me: What was it like retiring?

Mr. G: What was it like retiring. I don't know. (Laughter) When you don't want to do something it isn't very pleasant. That's all I can say about that one I guess.

Me: How do you feel about the Ely School closing?



Mr. G: Oh well, like I said, it was getting old. It was falling apart. Instead of spending money on this place and National Mine and North Lake, I think it is very nice that they are putting up that new school. I voted yes on the milage because I thought it was something to add to the \_\_\_\_\_ . Kids deserve to have nice, modern buildings, now a days. You know. These buildings were ok for the time you know. But now with all this modern computer and technology, no they have to have new buildings.

Me: Do you have any pictures you want to share with us?

Mr. G: Oh, I never- even thought of getting some out.

Me: Do you know anyone else we can interview that did something at Ely?



Mr. G: You know I called Jean Warlin. She taught out here for many years. And you already have her. So she said I've already... been selected. So the only other one I could come up with was Warren Munson. He's been principal out here for... for about 28 years. Other than him... I couldn't think of any... I could not come up with a person. All the older timers who were around, they are not around any more. You know what I mean. That had worked there. ~~to~~ I could only come up with him.

Me: Do you have anything you'd like to add?

Mr. G: No, that's it.



Me: OK

Mr. G: OK... Thank you

Me: Sure