

CHAD ANDERSON'S INTERVIEW WITH KEN ALDERTON

ME: This is Chad Anderson, I'll be interviewing Mr. Ken Alderton on December 16 1990. He was a student at National Mine School. We'll be doing the interview at Mr. Alderton's house.

ME: When and Where were you born?

Mr. Alderton: I was born here in National Mine in 1929, February 27, 1929

ME: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Mr. Alderton: Two brothers and... seven sisters.

ME: Can you remember their names and ages?

Mr. A: Just About (ha, ha), do you want them named?

ME: Sure.

Mr. A: Ok. I got one sister Pat whom must be 65, brother Allen is 59, 60 now, I guess he just turned 60 last week, no, yesterday (ha, ha), December 15, and Vivian 58 I guess, Sally must be 56, Lucille 54, no Karen's 54, Lucille is 52..... Who's after her, Mary Beth, she must be about 48 probably and then there's Caroline who is 41 I'd say, and Jerry must be about 38.

ME: How many of them went to National Mine?

MR.A: All of them, every one.

ME: When and Who did you marry?

MR.A: I married Rosalie, my classmate, in 1951, June 23, 1951.

ME: Do you have children?

MR.A: We have a girl and a boy.

ME: What are their names and ages?

MR.A: Darrel and Julie. Darrel is 36 and Julie is 31.

ME: Did they go to National Mine?

MR.A: Darrel graduated from National Mine in 72 and Julie graduated from Westwood.

MR.A: in 77

ME: What years did you attend National Mine?

MR.A: From 37 to 47, no must be 35 to 47.

ME: So you graduated from National Mine?

MR.A: yes, and we never went to kindergarten.

ME: Do you remember some of your teachers from grade school?

MR.A: Well there was _____ and, Ms. Austin who is now Mrs. Gleason, and Ms. Peterson _____, Gene, what was our sixth grade teacher? Gene Thomas, and seventh grade of course we had a different amount of teachers. But there was Mr. Annala who happens to be a great uncle to your present Randy Annala. And _____ who was the superintendent and there was a Mrs. Coghlin, several other teachers in high school.

ME: Do you remember any humorous or interesting stories about them?

MR.A: Not really, but in those days there wasn't as much joking and cutting up as there is today that we know of, that we knew of at the time. We were all straight laced.

ME: Do you remember some of your junior high or high school teachers?

MR.A: I mentioned Mr. Annala and Mr. _____, Mr. Lindbergh, and Mrs. _____ there was several of them.

ME: How long was the school day?

MR.A: We used to start at 9:00 and we had an hour off, an hour and 15 minutes for lunch and we were done at 4:00 in high school. In junior high we were done at 3:30.

ME: How did you get to school?

MR.A: Well when I was in the first six grades I lived out in Green Crick location, which is off of 581 out there, we rode a bus from Ely Township, at that time we lived in Ely Township, in the southern half of Ely Township, attended National Mine school though. We were bussed in by the Hankala Bus Company and Otto Anderson Bus Company.

ME: What subjects did you have?

MR.A: Oh, basically English, arithmetic; reading, writing, arithmetic; history, geography.

ME: What was your favorite one?

MR.A: I couldn't say... History I guess

ME: What was the toughest one?

MR.A: Algebra in high school.

ME: How did kids dress?

MR.A: We had a dress code in a sense. There was no slacks for the girls, boys were usually fairly well dressed, no cutoffs, no shorts, no t-shirt tops.

ME: Were there any special fads or sayings?

MR.A: Not really, During WW II there were probably a few, but I don't recall

ME: How were kids expected to act and behave?

MR.A: They had to be well behaved. There was no sassing of the teachers, no whispering or loud talking. Teachers were strict disciplinarians at the time.

ME: Did the kids obey?

MR.A: Very much so.

ME: What punishments were given?

MR.A: Well down in the grades there was one teacher who used to pull the hair a little bit and slap 'em across the fingers with a ruler. If they were really unruly, and they all remember that.

ME: What kind of extracurricular activities were there?

MR.A: There really wasn't any supervised activities other than basketball, basketball was a whole life back in those days. I started in 5th grade and went right through high school, played basketball all the time.

ME: Did any teams win a trophy or championship?

MR.A: Not during my team year. We came close one year, but an outside team came in and beat us.

ME: How did the teams travel to other schools?

MR.A: Well, lets see...when our...~~from~~ junior high we never had any competition outside of Ishpeming St. John's church and they'd come by cars. But when we got into high school our local bus took us. We travelled as far as Michigamme and Trowary. Republic, Champion, Ishpeming. We used to play Ishpeming B team as a regular season game.

ME: Do you remember any special cheers for the team?

MR.A: (ha, ha,) two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate! (ha, ha, ha)

ME: How would you describe your academic performance?

MR.A: Average

ME: What was lunch time like?

MR.A: Well the bused students either carried bag lunches... I guess they all carried bag lunches they never had any hot lunch program per say. Once in a great while there was a, like a soup line or, hot beans, and once in a while they'd give us juices, tomato juices or grapefruit juices, there was no hot lunch program.

ME: Where was the cafeteria?

MR.A: It was called a lunchroom, I don't know what room that is now.

Rosalie Alderton: The art room.

ME: Who was the principal?

MR.A: George Annala

ME: Could you describe him?

MR.A: strict disciplinarian, every body respected him and they still talk about what a good teacher he was.

ME: Did the school have any special picnics or outings?

MR.A: Not really no picnics or outings. We did have junior high and highschool parties. Each grade would have a party sometime during the year.

ME: Did any of your teachers have an impact on your life?

MR.A: Well, I suppose most of them did in a sense. But I'd say George Annala with his discipline is the most memorable.

ME: What was your graduation ceremony like?

MR.A: We had an outside speaker come in from Marquette, and our valedictorian and salutatorian each gave a short talk.

ME: What special memories do you have of your graduation?

MR.A: Our graduation was in a two-part series. We had a _____ night on a Sunday evening and our graduation was always on Thursdays.

ME: Did you have a prom?

MR.A: No, we just had those high school parties where we would have a dance.

ME: Did any tragedies occur when you were in school?

MR.A: No.

ME: Were you able to maintain contacts with your childhood friends?

MR.A: Several of them, over the years we have class reunions, we had class reunions every 5 years for several years and we had a great big school reunion in 1966 commemorating 50 years of graduating classes from National Mine and we are having a 75 year anniversary coming up this year in July.

ME: What do you think is the biggest change in the school since you were a student?

MR.A: Well the school facility itself has gone from a ~~kindergarten~~ kindergarten-12 to a K-8 grade system through a consolidation, the removal of the auditorium. The gym and auditorium were one large area at one time. We sat in the auditorium and watched all the ball games and plays.

ME: What are your fondest memories of National Mine?

MR.A: The senior class plays, spring operettas, and basketball.

ME: Were you a good basket ball player

MR.A: Yeah (ha, ha, ha)

ME: In as much detail as possible, could you describe your school board position? (6)

MR.A: Well, I was elected in 1958 for the first time and I served the National Mine school board for 15 years and then I got on to the N.I.C.E. school board for the next 8 years. I had 23 years of school board experience.

ME: What was the most rewarding part of your term on the school board?

MR.A: I suppose I was ~~instrumental~~ instrumental for helping one of the persons responsible for the consolidation of the 4 or 5 townships.

ME: What was the most difficult part of the school board?

MR.A: Usually negotiations when we had to keep the teachers happy and keep the taxpayers happy at the same time.

ME: How were you chosen for your school board position?

MR.A: Elected

ME: During your position were you involved in any special projects or programs?

MR.A: Well the rebuilding of the Westwood high school and additions and changing of the auditorium and gymnasium here in National Mine School.

ME: Could you describe some interesting or humorous events that happened during your school board term?

MR.A: I don't think there's really anything humorous. Exciting would probably be the first graduating class from Westwood High School.

ME: Could you describe what your co-board members were like?

MR.A: Well, the first 14 years they were all from Tilden Township except for one from Ely Township who was manager of the Northwoods club at the time. He has since moved away.

ME: After you graduated from high school, did you go to college at all?

MR. A: I took a couple of short courses, one at Michigan State, one at Northern. The short course at Michigan State was involved with dairy herd improvement I was a milk tester for a few years. At Northern I took some business courses. I was learning how to market products and so forth. Then I ~~was~~ went into the insurance business and had several courses in insurance.

ME: What has your career been since then?

MR. A: I was an insurance man for 20 years and milk man for 13 years and now I'm a laborer at the local powder plant or explosive plant down here.

ME: Were you ever in the service?

MR. A: I spent two years in the service, 1950-1952, during the Korean War but never went overseas.

ME: You mentioned that your wife went to school with you, what years did she go to school?

MR. A: Same thing, she graduated in 47 also.

ME: Did you date in high school?

MR. A: Started as freshmen in high school and have been going ever since. I'll be 40 years this summer.

ME: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MR. A: Well, I think through the forensics and decorations and so forth and school plays that we had in high school. It helped me in public places. I happened to be raised to the highest degree in Oddfellowship in the state of Michigan. ~~was~~ I was the grandmaster in 1950. Presently I'm the Grand Patriarch of the Grand Encantment of Michigan which is the highest position possible in the state of Michigan. And I've done that through I'd say background from high school training.

ME: So you were involved in forensics in high school?

MR. A: Somewhat, yeah.

ME: Did you enjoy that?

MR. A: Well I did, I must have. It was more or less you'd try out for it and if you made it they weren't dramatic teams or anything like that.

MR. A: Freshmen and sophomore were declamations and juniors and seniors were orations. Declamations you used someone else's material and memorized it and orations you wrote up your own material and memorized it. And give it in front of the public.

ME: Did they have any football teams back then?

MR. A: No football teams, no baseball teams, no soccer, no track

ME: Did the junior high kids play basketball at all?

MR. A: They did. Like I said they'd play small teams from St. Paul ~~and~~ Negaunee and St. Johns in Ishpeming and maybe some from Marquette and that was the extent of the junior high basketball.

ME: Well I think that's just about all of it.

MR. A: Thank You.

ME: How many people were in your graduating class?

MR. A: Our graduating class consisted of 18, which was the largest graduating class up to that date. Since then of course, they've gotten larger.

ME: How many kids went to National Mine school?

MR. A: Well I'd say there were 75 in high school 9-12th grade and in the lower grades I suppose they'd average about 160. It wasn't a big school it was a Class E school then.

ME: No band or anything?

MR. A: Nope, no band, they had a band about three years after we got out of high school

ME: When you were a child in National Mine, what did you do for fun?

MR. A: We used to go skating and skiing and sleigh riding.

ME: Do you remember what the stis were like?

MR. A: Well, yeah the first pair of stis I had were birds-eye maple and 5 feet long. I took a jump on a hill out in Green Creek and broke 'em on the first jump. I've never had a new pair of stis since

ME: Is there anything else you'd like to add about National Mine school?

MR. A: No.