

My name is Emily Hallum and I am interviewing Florence Dobson. Today's date is February 23, 1997. We will focus on Florence's memories as a student and teacher's aid at the National Mine School.

Me: Can you please give me your full name.

Mrs. D: Florence Elaine Dobson.

maiden name?

Me: Can you please tell me when & where you were born.

MD: I was born in National Mine. December the 8th 1923.

Me: Could you please tell me a few things about your family?

MD: Well, I came from a big family. There were 8 girls and 2 boys. And I was the baby of the family.

Me: Where did you first attend school?

MD: National Mine School.

Me: How old were you when you first started?

MD: I started when I was four.

Me: Do you remember any of your teachers?

MD: I remember most of them.

Me: Did you have a favorite teacher?

MD: Well, I think Mrs. Gleason was my favorite. I don't know if it was because she was my kindergarten teacher when I first started school.

Me: How far away did you live from the school?

MD: About a mile.

Me: How did you get to school?

MD: Walked. We didn't have buses in those days. (Laughing)

Me: Describe a typical day as an elementary student.

MD: Well, it was pretty much like it is today, just normal school days. I think the subjects were about the same. We didn't have computers then though. (Laughing)

Me: How many students were in a typical classroom?

MJ: Well, I'd say in our class when we were younger, about 15 or 16

Me: Did you have to wear any types of clothing to school?

MD: No. Nobody was fussy in those days. We were about the same.

Me: How many hours long was school?

MD: Let's see, we started at 9 in the morning & we had an hour off for lunch & we went back at one & got out at four.

Me: How was discipline handled?

MD: Well, they had very few discipline problems. We all were kind of afraid of the teachers. (Laughing)

Me: Did you ever get in trouble?

MD: Well not that I remember.

Me: Could you please tell me what lunch was like?

MD: I came home for lunch every day. We never had hot lunches at school.

Me: Were the meals that they cooked at school ever there?

MD: No. Na-huh. The kids that lived farther away carried their own lunch.

Me: Okay. Did you have like a recess?

MD: Yeah, we had a recess.

Me: What types of things did you do during recess?

MD: Oh we went out to play, and played hopscotch. We had hopscotches made on the sidewalks at school & jumped rope & I guess the boys played marbles.

Me: How long was recess for?

MD: I think it was only about 15 minutes.

Me: Can you please describe some of the holiday celebrations at school? When Mrs. Gleason was there.

MD: All I remember about them was Mrs. Gleason's programs. Practicing every day for them.

Me: Did you ever get gifts from school?

MD: Oh we use to draw names at Christmas time & exchange 10¢ gifts I think at that time. (Laughing)

Me: Did you have a particular place where you kept your jackets?

MD: Yeah, there was little, we called them cloakrooms & they were right in the same class we were in & we hung our jackets in there.

Me: In grades 6th-12th or 7th-12th did you switch classes?

MD: Starting in 7th grade we did.

Me: What kind of classes did you have?

MD: Was that in High School, do you mean?

Me: Yeah or like 7th or 8th grade.

MD: Well, we English & Math, & History & I can't think of what else.

Me: How many different teachers did you have?

MD: Maybe about five.

Me: What kind of sports were girls and boys allowed to participate in?

MD: Well, the girls didn't participate in any of the sports. The boys had basketball.

Me: What did some of the uniforms look like?

MD: They were pretty much like they are today.

Me: What kinds of activities did you do during classtime?

MD: Not anything special, just our same old basic things

Me: Do you know about how many students were in the whole school?

MD: I have no idea how many there were in there.

Me: What was your favorite subject?

MD: I think Reading. I've always been a reader.

Me: What year did you graduate in?

MD: 1941

Me: How many students graduated in your class?

MD: 7 girls (laughing) All the boys quit before they got to graduate. They all had to quit & go out to work I guess.

Me: Did like many students drop out of High School?

MD: Well not many of the girls, but most of the boys did at that time.

Me: Did you ever do any extra curricular activities?

MD: No, just the school plays & things like that.

Me: How old were you when you first went on a date?

MD: Oh I think I was 17.

Me: Where did you go?

MD: We went to a movie. (Laughing)

Me: Did you ever get any yearbooks?

MD: No we didn't have them when we were in school.

Me: Were there any minorities or recent immigrants in your class?

MD: No, uh-huh.

Me: Do you remember getting any diseases when you were a child?

MD: Well, the regular ones. Ah measles & I use to get ^{whooping} ~~hooping~~ cough at that time when I was younger.

Me: Did you miss any school because of it?

MD: I use to miss school because of my — cough & I use to get bad sore throats.

Me: Did you ever get to go on a field trip?

MD: I don't remember ever going on field trips when I was in school.

Me: What were your most vivid or favorite memories of school?

MD I can't remember if there was anything special, (laughing)

Me What grade did you enjoy the most?

MD Kindergarten

Me Did you ever get an allowance?

MD No

Me Did you have a favorite toy or doll?

MD Oh I use to have dolls, but I don't remember of any special one.

Me How old were you when you first started driving?

MD 15

Me Did you have any role models?

MD No, not really

Me Did you have any after school chores?

MD Oh we use to have to haul in wood & carry water in from the pump down the road.

Me Did you ever play any childhood games?

MD Oh yeah we use play a lot of games. Our yard use to be full of kids wed play kick the can & can over & Anti - i - Anti - i - over our barn roof (laughing)

Me: Do you remember what it was like during WWII?

MD: Well I was married during WWII & my husband had to go in the service so.

Me: Did it affect your life in any way?

MD: Well, yeah in a way it did because my sister's husband went into the service too & so we lived together while our husbands were in the service.

Me: Did you have a T.U. or radio?

MD: We had a radio, but no T.U.

Me: Did you go to church when you were younger?

MD: Oh that was a must. We had to go to church.

Me: How does church differ now then it did back then?

MD: Well its pretty much the same I guess.

Me: What year did you get married in?

MD: 1943

Me: How long were you a teacher's aid for?

MD: 17 years

Me: Did you begin helping at National Mine?

MD: Yeah.

Me: Who were some of the people that you remembered from National Mine?

MD: You mean the kids in school?

Me: Yeah or anybody.

MD: I don't think there was any special ones

Me: What was a typical day like?

MD: Well I worked with the kindergarten & first grade & the ones that needed help. Helping them with their names or what-ever, I'd help them with.

Me: What were some of your duties as a teacher's aid?

MD: Well that was it, just helping the kids who needed help.

Me: Did you take part in any programs?

MD: No programs but I'd help out when the kids went on field trips.

Me: How did students change from the beginning?

MD: Well it seems to me that kids got more outgoing at first.

Me: Where there any disease epidemics?

MD: Not that I remember.

Me: Were there many snow days?

MD: Is that when I was in school or when I was teacher's aid?

Me: When you were a teacher's aid.

MD: Oh yeah we had a few snowdays every winter when we had our bad storms.

Me: Did you have to make them up like at the end of the year?

MD: I think we did ya. You have to get a certain amount of days in every year so.

Me: Did many children stay back?

MD: No not very many.

Me: What were some of your most vivid/favorite memories of being a teacher's aid?

MD: Oh it was a job I really enjoyed especially with those little kindergarteners & 1st graders. They were so cute.

Me: When did you retire?

MD: Dec. 30 1986

Me: Could you please tell me the names of your children & grandchildren.

MD: My children are Lee, Kay & Jamie & the grandchildren are Luke, Brad & Jamie

Me: What was special about National Mine?

MD: Oh I was born & raised here & I've lived here all the time so I always liked it here. It was a small town & everybody liked it here & knew each other.

Me: What areas attended Nat. Mine?

MD: When I was in school?

Me: Yeah.

MD: Well, they did have buses coming from the Cliff Farms & ah from out 581 way.

Me: How has the building changed?

MD: Oh the only change I know is that they took out the auditorium & they put a kitchen in that they didn't have before.

Me: Could you tell me a few things about the auditorium?

MD: It was really nice we sat in seats which was just like sitting in a theater. And the basketball games were played on the auditorium floor & all the school plays were played on that floor.

Me: Was there a conflict between Nat. Mine? & Ishpeming?

MD: Well there always was a little rivalry there.

Me: Please tell me a few more details on anything I haven't thought to ask you?

MD: Not really.