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# April Engman Interview with Mary Johnson

Me: I'm interviewing Mrs. Johnson, the date is Dec. 12, 1990, and it's going to be taken at her house. And I'm April Engman.

Me: When and where were you born?

Mrs. J: I was born in Pegaunee Michigan on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1943.

Me: (Oh) Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mrs. J: I had one brother and he died at a (Oh) when he was around 39 years old.

Me: Do you know when and where your parents were born?

Mrs. J: Well my dad was <sup>born</sup> in National Mine (Oh) I'm not sure when, and my mother was born in North Lake.

Me: What years did you attend National Mine School?

Mrs. J: I started in (Oh) <sup>probably</sup> ~~maybe~~ <sup>about</sup> 1950, because I didn't go to kindergarten (um) I lived out Green Creek all of my life, and they never had any bus service for the kindergarten, so I started in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Me: (um) Do you remember names of any grade school teachers and could you describe what they were like?

Mrs. J: Well when I started first grade there

was Mrs. Viola Magnuson was my teacher and I still run in to her every now and then she hasn't changed one bit. The one teacher that stands out in my mind was my fifth grade teacher her name was Mrs. Fanny Johnson every body was afraid of her she had one arm and any <sup>little</sup> bit of noise or cracking of any thing she had her ruler handy and you got it right across the hand laughing I think she stands out in my mind the most because every body was afraid of her.

ME: okay, so was she your favorite teacher?  
Mrs J: well I don't think she was one of my favorite teachers, no, she was a good teacher but she was very strict.

ME: who was your favorite teacher?  
Mrs J: and your talking about now in grade school?

ME: yes  
Mrs J: (um) I think I liked (um) Mrs. Gleason she was a swell person. She was, she put on the greatest plays in National Mine ever.

ME: Do you remember <sup>at the names</sup> some of your junior high and High School teachers?

Mrs J: Junior High lets see I think I had Mrs. Hope Thomas and I also worked for Mr. Thomas when I was secretary <sup>at</sup> of Champion School in 1974 he was my boss for a year or two years.

ME: Did you have a favorite High School teacher?  
Mrs J: I think one of my favorite High School teachers was my typing teacher his name was Stewart Coe everybody called him

'okramny' everyday when it was time for our @ typing period we used to race to ~~the~~ the class and he'd lock the door on us, we kept on knocking on the door. before he let us in. And the typing room is where (m) I don't know if Mrs. Annala is in the room this year, with the long narrow hallway is he still in that room?

ME: MC

MRSJ: Well that where our typing class used to be and he'd always met us there and lock the door on us and we'd have to wait 5 minutes before he let us in (laugh) I think he was one of my favorite high school teachers.

ME: How did you get to school <sup>each day</sup> and how far was it?

MRSJ: Well like I said I lived in this area all my life, and my parents home is right down there and we always used to catch the bus on 851, and it was (h) 10 minute ride to school.

ME: Now did the kids dress, was there a dress code?

MRSJ: there was a dress code when we went to school the girls weren't aloud to wear slacks or jeans it was skirts, blouses and dresses.

ME: (m) what kind of subjects were taught at the time?

MRSJ: (h) probably about the same subjects that ~~are~~ <sup>now</sup> taught - except ~~there~~ there weren't computers or that but there was typing, Scienc, Chemistry, History and Homec and you usual subjects.

ME: (okay) what was your favorite subject and

why

MRSJ: (um) my favorite subject was probably my business class who I had Mr. Caga for a teacher I liked typing and he was an interesting teacher

ME: (okay) what subject gave you the most difficulties and why

MRSJ: (um) probably chemistry I'm not sure why probably because I didn't hit the books hard enough (laugh)

ME: (okay) How were kids expected to act or behave

MRSJ: Kids acted with respect to their teachers there was no talking back or talking out of turn if you had something to say in class you raised your hand and you were called upon to say something

ME: (okay) what kinds of punishments were given?

MRSJ: What kinds of punishments were given probably just staying after school and the parents having to come to school to pick up their child. I really can't remember too much about that.

ME: (okay) what kinds of extra-curricular activities were given?

MRSJ: well there was (um) lets see there was basket ball which is a favorite past for everybody, and there was band in school. that's probably it that I can remember.

ME: Did you participate in any? (3)

Mrs J: I was a band member all through high school (um) Mr. Zelltecken was our band teacher. Super guy, I still keep in touch with him.

ME: Do you remember any special moments in band?

Mrs J: I ~~me~~ (um) not really just that we had to play when there was a basketball game. The band always get to play, and even usual concerts.

ME: Did any sport teams win a trophy or a tournament?

Mrs J: (um) that I'm not sure

ME: What kinds of plays or programs were staged when you were in school?

Mrs J: Well there ~~was~~ always a senior class play when they got to play in 12th grade, and there was Christmas programs and like I said Mrs. Gleason put on the best plays around.

ME: Did you participate in any?

Mrs J: (um) everyone had to participate in the senior class play, and our play happened to be titled "Our town" (laugh)

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

Mrs J: About the plays?

ME: yeah

Mrs J: No I don't

ME: what was lunch time like? (9)

Mrs J: Lunch time, we had a very small lunch room when I went to school as a matter of fact the lunch room is the room where Mrs. Ameen has her art room,

ME: Oh - my gosh

Mrs J: ~~is~~ - that was the lunch room when I went to school

ME: did they have hot lunch?

Mrs J: yes they did, and meals were made from scratch and they were delicious  
(laugh)

ME: Did you have lots of homework?

Mrs J: We always had homework in every subject I come with four or five books every night and that's all I did at night time was homework

ME: what did you do after school hours?

Mrs J: well where I lived I didn't get to go low ~~near~~ or that very much so it was mostly homework, and reading, I like to read a lot, that's about it.

ME: (okay) describe the graduation ceremony at National Mine

Mrs J: (um) Our graduation class was the highest graduating class from National Mine it was a whole total of 25 students, and as most graduations it was a sad affair but when I went to school before our

graduation service like the Sunday before ⑦  
we had ~~an~~ service it was called the 'Bachelor  
service' where we had a pastor there and all  
the parents attended and it was a very nice service  
MC: (pray) were you able to maintain contact with  
your childhood friends?

Mrs J: A lot of my friends still live in the area  
so I get to see them, every now and then,  
and the ones who had moved away we  
usually keep in contact during the holidays.

MC: now I'm going to ask you questions about  
your job, what years did you work at  
National Mine School?

Mrs J: I started in July 1969 and before that I  
used to work in Kansas city, well as soon  
as I graduated I went to Kansas city I  
worked for Transworld Airlines there then  
when I decided to move back to Michigan  
I found out there was a job opening at  
National Mine, and I put my name for  
it, and I got interviewed for the job and  
I got it, and I started in 1969 and have  
been working I worked there for a little 20  
years

MC: In as much detail as possible please  
describe your job?

Mrs J: Well the usual secretarial duties (um)  
there's typing, book keeping, filing when  
you work for a school there's things when

like selling lunch tickets, and oh working <sup>at</sup> Basketball games.

ME: What was the most rewarding part of your career?

Mrs J: <sup>probably</sup> The most rewarding part of my career was getting to meet and know all the students that were coming ~~through~~ through, watching them growing up, and going to their graduations and a lot of them come back for a visit.

ME: How or why did you choose your career?

Mrs J: Well like I said I worked as a tele-type operator for trans world airlines and when I come back I just wanted to go into secretarial work of some sort.

ME: How have you seen your duties of your change over the years?

Mrs J: Over the years there have been oh probably more jobs that all the years go by there has been more responsibilities.

ME: During your career were you involved in any special projects programs or extra-curricular activities?

Mrs J: Well when I was at National Mine I was involved in the Red Dust Program I used to do the typing of the stories and when the kids got to go to Washington D.C. for their different competition I went along and chaperoned on the bus.

ME: Did you receive any special ~~awards~~ <sup>training</sup> awards?



for your job?

Mrs J: No, I think I got one crash course in the one week from the secretary who was working there her name was Miss Hargett and she just gave me the quick run down and I guess I caught on to every thing in a week or so.

MC: Could you describe an interesting or a events that happened during your career?

Mrs J: Well Mr. Rulling was my boss for many years and (oh) there are a few humorous stories One was one day we had a particular busy day, many things going wrong and we had a walk in the safe in the office. I was going in there to bring some money and he followed me and closed the door, and we were both locked in the safe (laugh) we couldn't get it open from the inside, so we waited about 10 minutes, and we heard somebody out there hollering Dad where are you? (laugh) His son Tommy walked in the office so we told him where we were (laugh) and we told him not to touch any thing but to go get someone well he found Judy Salika, she happened to be working in the kitchen, so she come in the office then after she got there laughing at us (um) we told her how to move the

safe just so and she got us out then (laugh) I bet we were in there for at least a good 15-20 minutes (laugh) and another time I remember I was having problems with my duplicating machine in the office and Mr. Ruesing went to blow the, there's a hole, he was going to blow it out to clean it, and he sucked instead and swallowed some fluid (oh) well it was poisonous (laugh) so he had to hurry to the emergency room and on his way there he was speeding and the police chased him (laugh) all the way to the medical center well, when he got there then he got rushed in and ever thing and had his stomach pumped out (laugh)

ME: could you describe what your co-workers were like?

Mrs J: My co-workers at National Mine where just like having one big happy family we all got along pretty well we'd help each other out and any body had a problem we'd help them work it out

ME: At any time did you feel like changing careers?

Mrs J: (um) a few years ago I thought about

changing my career and an opening came up at Westwood High School so I thought I would put in a transfer. 20 years in one building I think I needed a change (laugh)

ME: How did the community feel about National Mine School?

Mrs T: (um) from what I know, I guess they have a good feeling toward the school (um) their pretty much commet is gabrable.

ME: Did any of your family members or relatives work for this school?

Mrs T: My dad worked for this school (oh) quite a few years ago he as a custodian and bus driver.

ME: How has the building it self change over the years?

Mrs T: well with the large enrollment National Mine been having they did put on the new edition plus the lunchroom, we got rid of our auditorium and put in our bleachers in the gym, this is all been <sup>something</sup> new since I been working there

ME: If you had to do it all again would you choose the same career?

Mrs T: I think I would I really like secretarial work and its a fun job, its nice meeting people and getting to help.

ME: What were your biggest responsibilities

on your job?

(15)

Mrs J: The biggest responsibilities (h) probably handling all the money that goes on, there your lunch money, money from your basketball games and what ever money is put around comes to the secretary in the office that's probably your biggest responsibility keeping everything straight there.

ME: Did you ever win any awards or be recognized for your performance?

Mrs J: Nope

ME: What are your fondest memories of National Mine School?

Mrs J: I think my fondest memories was when I left, a few months after I left I had a surprise ~~car~~ here one night, I was sitting in my back porch and I, this car came up <sup>tooting</sup> my driveway I look out the window and there's a great big white limosine out there (um) a few of a teacher line and they were coming to take me out to eat, so that was probably one of my best memories of the school.

ME: So you have any thing else you want to add?

Mrs J: No, I don't think so

ME: Okay

Mrs T: Just good luck and try to write up <sup>(13)</sup>  
something about this (laugh)

me: thank you for letting me interview  
you

Mrs T: Okay