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## Hattie Pennala's interview with Dan Kuisti

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Me: My name is Hattie Pennala. It is December 16. I am interviewing Daniel Kuisti. He was a former student at National Mine High School. We are at his house in Ishpeming.

Me: When and where were you born?

Dan: I was born in National Mine December the 25<sup>th</sup> 1915.

Me: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Dan: Well I had eight sisters and one brother, but there my brother has passed away and three of my sisters have passed away. Let's see how many left now. I have five sisters left besides myself.

Me: What are their names?

Dan: Oh there's Maimie. Do you want the last names too?

Me: No.

Dan: Maimie, Emma, Martha, Helen, and Florence.

Me: Ages?

Dan: Maimie will be 85 and a next week Maimie will be 85. Emma is a 77. Martha's 73, and Helen is 69, and Florence is 65.

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

Dan: They were born somewhere over in Finland. I don't know exactly where.

Me: What years did you attend National Mine School?

Dan: Well I started kindergarten in 1920 I think and I graduated in 1934.

Me: Do you remember the names of any grade school teachers?

Dan: Yes, I had Ms. Roberts, and Ms. Peterson, Ms. Lunblad, Ms. Millimaki, and I forget who I had in kindergarten and first grade I forget.

Me: Could you describe what they were like?

Dan: Oh they were strict teachers but they taught you well and you had to learn. They were real strict and there was no fooling around. They would send you out in the hall.

Me: Did you have a favorite?

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Dan: well not really didn't have any favorites. They were all pretty fair to me.

Me: Do you remember any humorous or interesting stories about your grade school teachers?

Dan: Oh not off hand I can't think of any no.

Me: Do you remember the names of some of your Junior high and High school teachers?

Dan: Mr. Annala, Mr. Bath, Mr. Swanson, Mr. Gleason and I think that was it for junior high

Me: Could you describe what they were like?

Dan: They were all dedicated teachers and pretty strict and you had to learn.

Me: Did you have a favorite high school teacher?

Dan: No, Not really. Oh yes I had one Ms. Nicaskle she was a English and Latin teacher she was my favorite teacher.

Me: Why was she your favorite teacher?

Dan: Well I don't really know I think she was the only high school woman high school teacher that I had (ha ha)

Me: Do you have any interesting or humorous stories about your high school teachers?

Dan: Can't think of any

Me: How did you get to school each day and how far was it?

Dan: Oh we walked to school. I lived ah downtown National Mine <sup>near</sup> ~~at~~ the Post Office so we walked it was about a oh I suppose 3/4 of a mile. We took shortcuts but if you went around the road but we had trails going through the neighborhood going up the tracks and to the short cut but it'd be about a little over a mile if you walked around the road. but we didn't never use the road unless there was too much snow that we had to walk around the road.

Me: umhm what time did school start?

Dan: I started at nine o'clock. We got out at twelve then it started at one again and we got out at four.

Me: How did the kids dress?

Dan: Oh they dressed I don't know what you'd call it casual dressing.

Me: So there wasn't any dress codes?

Dan: No there were no dress codes or anything then. The one thing we wore our good clothes to school. When we came home and went out to play and went ski riding or anything we put our old clothes on. Nowadays when they go skiing they put on their fancy outfits and go to ~~the~~ school with their old baggy pants and torn pants (haha)

Me: What kinds of subjects were taught at that time?

Dan: Were taught well in high school I had algebra, history, chemistry, biology, english, Latin, and I think that's all I can think of right now in subjects.

Me: What was your favorite subject and why?

Dan: Mathematics was my favorite subject cause I was always good in math. (haha) It came easy.

Me: What subject gave you the most difficulty and why?

Dan: Latin. Because I don't know I could read Latin good cause I could read Finnish I could read Latin but I couldn't understand it I didn't get much out of it.

Me: Were there any special fads or sayings when you were in school?

Dan: No not that I know of.

Me: How were kids expected to act or behave?

Dan: Oh you like I said the teachers were pretty strict. You were supposed to pay attention and not be whispering or anything.

Me: What kinds of punishments were given?

Dan: Well you had to stay after school. In the lower grades they'd send you out to stand in the hall if you were too bad and ah it was mostly after school or else write something on a piece of paper 100 times or something like that, that you wouldn't do it again.

Me: Were you or any of your friends suspended?

Dan: No.

Me: What kinds of extracurricular activities were offered?

Dan: Well basketball was the only thing we had in National Mine. Well music if you can call that I don't know

Me: Did you participate in any?

Dan: Yes, I played basketball.

Me: Do you remember any special moments?

Dan: what special

Me: Special moments?

Dan: not really.

Me: Did any sports team win a trophy or tournament?

Dan: Yes well the team before I got into high school a couple years before that they won the Upper Peninsula championship then they went down to Lower Michigan and played in the state tournament down there. They won the first game but they lost the second.

Me: Could you describe the affect it had on the school?

Dan: Oh yeah everybody was happy and in fact they went down on a train everybody from school went down, the train came in about midnight I guess and everybody went down to meet the train all the school kids and.

Me: What kinds of plays or programs were staged while you were in school?

Dan: Oh they had some musical plays and they had some regular Christmas plays and something like that

Me: Did you participate in any?

Dan: Yes I had to in a few. Cause they had so few kids in high school that everybody had to participate. We didn't have enough.

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

Dan: No. I can't remember anything.

Me: What was lunchtime like?

Dan: Lunchtime? Well we got off at twelve and ran all the way home from school, had lunch. In them days when I was in high school I used to get Mining Journals to come in the morning, I'd glance at that in a hurry and then hurry back to school. Had to hurry back to school before one so. We always ran all the way home girls and boys they all ran.

Me: Did anybody stay in school to eat lunch?

Dan: Yes. some of them that ah came from. Some came on a bus. They stayed at school to eat their lunch and those that and there were some that lived about 2 or 3 miles who had to walk to school and they carried their lunch. There were no school lunchies they carried their brown bag lunches.

Me: Was there a cafeteria?

Dan: NO. no cafeteria.

Me: Where did they eat?

Dan: Oh they they did have a lunch room to eat in but there was that was all the room where they ate they called it the lunch room and they ate in there. But there were no meals or anything at the school ya know, just a lunch the kids carried themselves.

Me: Who was the principle when you were in school?

Dan: George Annala was the principle.

Me: Could you describe him?

Dan: Oh he was very strict and a good teacher. He was ah he was born and raised in National Mine too. Later he went he taught well I had him for mathematics and he taught English for awhile. Different subjects and later he went to Ishpeming High School to teach there, where he finished out his teaching career. He taught in National Mine for many years.

Me: Did you have lots of homework?

Dan: Well not really too much. Not too much homework. I used to get most of my work done in study periods in school, we had study periods. I'd hurry up and try to get my work done. Well I know some of my sisters used to carry homework.

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Dan: But I suppose I was too lazy. (hahaha)

Me: What did you do after school hours?

Dan: School hours in the winter time we were always skiing or out sleighing. Then we had a we used to have a basket to play basketball underneath a light pole. A light near our house there on the road of course many there weren't ~~too~~ too many cars in them days we could go out and play basketball underneath the light on the road. In summer time we used to play ball. Softball that's all we do. We pitched a lot of horseshoe in summertime and course the crick ran right close to our house or about a block from our house. We an used to go fishing there when we were kids or swimming in an old mine pit

Me: Was there a place where everyone hung out?

Dan: Well, near the store yah they hung out near the store. There was one store in National well there was two stores in fact. They hang out at either one of them places.

Me: Could you describe the graduation ceremony at National Mine?

Dan: Oh lets see. I'll see how many graduated can you turn it off for a sec?

Tape went off and on again.

Dan: Well there were sixteen graduates in my class. I think that was one of the bigger classes. They got bigger as the years went by and we just had a little program. I forget who the speaker was. Had a program, went home there was no celebrations or anything. Went right home. Walked home from school and went home that was it.

Me: Do you have any special memories of when you graduated?

Dan: No all except that I was happy to graduate and be out of school.

Me: Were you able to maintain contact with your childhood friends?

Dan: Yes. I still maintain contact. Stay in contact with a lot of them.

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

Dan: well, I think maybe Mr. Annala did. I think he was one that taught good. You had to learn from him or else. I think he taught me alot about discipline and work and what not.

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

Dan: Oh playing basket ball. They had good basket ball teams they had up there. Of course that was about all we had to do in them days

Me: How do you think the school has changed since you were there?

Dan: Oh I haven't been there for quite a few years so I don't know. But, I guess most of the kids are bussed to school nowadays they don't walk, and ah I think the classes are much larger from when I went, and they don't have a high school there now, its they had a high school and you went right through grade school through high school right in the same school. that's all I know

Me: Is there anything you would like to add before we conclude the interview?

Dan: Well I just think National Mine was a good place to live and a good place to go to school, they had a good school, I think. From what I understand it's still a good school and I guess that's about all.

Me: Okay, thank you.