

Beth Bertucci's interview
with
Walter Manty

①

me: I am Beth Bertucci interviewing Walter Manty on Dec. 10, 1990. Mr. Manty was a student at National Mine, we are at Mr. Manty's house on county road PBB.

me: when and where were you born?

Mr. Manty: I was born in Ishpeming, September 24, 1923

me: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Manty: Pardon

me: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Manty: (Ah) I have a brother and sister that past away. Woody was one you know or don't you remember that. But I'll tell you the ones that are living: Martin, Martin lives in Traverse city. Then I'm next, Walt. Next one is Ruth. Ruth lives in Muskegon. Next one is Mildred. In fact she is a Mildred Bertucci, would you know her?

me: NO

Mr. Manty: Oh, you wouldn't hey. Oh ya well Mildred lives in Ishpeming. The youngest one Alice Jean she lives in Escanaba.

me: Oh! Do you know when and where your parents were born?

Mr. Manty: What?

ME: Do you know when and where
your parents were born? (2)

Mr. Manty: Ya, ah, Let's see. They were both born
in Finland. Ya, do you have to know
the year?

Me: If you know them

Mr. Manty: No. Ah I'll tell you they were
born in, ah, it's hard to say that
in English. It's called Vosomlani

Me: what years did you attend National
Mine School?

Mr. Manty: what year did I come to National
Mine? I would say, (Oh let's see haha)
about 1900's around that.

Me: what year did you start and graduate?

Mr. Manty: Pardon?

Me: what year did you start?

Mr. Manty: what year I started school?

Me: ya

Mr. Manty: Oh, I tell ya I was. This is a
long story, I was a pretty young
kid when I started. Ya know
those days, They didn't register
or anything like that. My oldest
sister took me to school and in
Kidnergarten so I went to Kidnergarten
you see. Now this was in the
spring of the year. And the reason

the done that, they used to send (3)
us kids to get used to school

Ya, know cause we were little tots.
So anyway I was in Kidnergarten
from April to June and they passed
me! (ha, ha, ha,) I went to first
grade well oh, I don't know but
are you going to ask me when
I graduated?

Me: Ya

Mr. Manty? Do you want me to tell you
now?

Me: Ya

Mr. Manty! Oh, O.K. (ha, ha, ha,) Ah, I graduated
in 1940. I was 16 years old.

me: Oh.

Mr. Manty! I think I was one of the
youngest who ever graduated out here.

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

Mr. Manty! Any what?

me: names, of any teachers?

Mr. Manty! names of any?

me: teachers

Mr. Manty! Churches?

Me: Teachers!

Mr. Manty! Teachers?

Me: Ya

Mr. Manty: Ya I can remember alot of them

ah There's one. Do you remember
Mrs. Gleason?

Me: Ya

Mr. Manty: She's still living ya know. Then
her husband was Pat Gleason, he
passed away some time ago. Then
there was Peterson, she's been gone
many years. There was ah, Fanny
Millimaki, she's been gone many years.
I'm trying to think of who. Mrs.
Gleason is the only one I can think
of that is living. Cause I been out
of school ah. We had our class
reunion already, last spring. I've
been out of school fifty years (ha, ha)
I didn't come over with Columbus
though (ha, ha, ha)

ME: Did you have a favorite teacher?
Why or why not?

Mr. Manty: Favorite what?

ME: Teacher

Mr. Manty: Well ya know, They were all good
teachers. I think, it's hard to say, they
were all good teachers, but Mrs. Gleason
was a nice lady, very nice. Did you
ever see her in town?

ME. Ya

(5)

Mr. Manty: You do hey? ya

Me: A couple times, I seen her

Mr. Manty: Ya, Ya, she's a nice lady.

Me: Do you remember anything

humorous or interesting stories about your grade school teachers?

Mr. Manty: Wow! That's a good one (ha, ha, ha)

I can't think of anything. Let's see

~~Me: can you remember anymore grade school teachers?~~

Mr. Manty: Ya, ah There was a Mrs. well she was a Ms. ~~Herring~~ in that time, I had her in first grade, and second grade. I had a Ms. Stoll in third grade. I had a Ms. Hooper in 4th grade. ah I had a Ms. Peterson in 5th grade and Ms. Millimaki in 6th grade. So I remembered all the teachers. Do I go to junior high next?

Me: yes

Mr. Manty: O.k, ah There was a Mr. Annala and ah, Mr. Gleason used to teach Geography in junior high. And there was a Mr. Griggs, he

is from downstate, he used (6) to teach ah oh I don't know I think it was arithmetic something like that anyway. Do we go to high school now?

Me! Ya, (ha, ha, ha)

Mr. Manty: Well then in high school we had Ms. Slyney she was our English teacher. I mentioned Mr. Griggs already, but ah, we had him in junior high for something, but we had Mr. Griggs for chemistry and physics. Then Mr. Gleason was a venial trading teacher and let's see now who else do we have now. Mr. Bath you remember him don't you?

Me! Ya

Mr. Manty: ya, Mr. Bath was a, he was the superintendent and Mr. Annala was the principle. Now Mr. Bath used to teach ah I think it was American Government I think it was American Government. And Mr. Annala used to teach History Mr. Griggs used to teach economics I think it was. I think that's all I can think of right now.

Me! Did you have any interesting (7) or humorous stories? about your teachers?

Mr. Manty: about the teachers?

Me! ya

Mr. Manty: ya, I'm still trying to think of that. Oh, let's see. I don't think I was to mean of a kid, so I had no fights.

Me! ha, ha,

Mr. Manty: (ha, ha) we, ah let's see now. We used to walk from here to school yuh, know. We never had buses. There were no buses in those days. And the kid that's used to ah, that were bused. They weren't bused really, they were ah, ridden in cars and from the real old day when I was a little one. Ah, they used to be a horse drawn. It was like a, it's hard to say how to describe it. It was like a big box anyway and the kids would be in it. They ah used to bring the kids. ah pull the kids ah, by sleigh with the horse. (ha, ha, ha)

Me! (ha, ha,)

Me! How did you get to (8) school each day & how far was it?

Mr. Manty! How far?

Me! Ya

Mr. Manty: ah, I just answered that but that's o.k. That's alright. School was about a mile from here. And we walked, and we used to come home for dinner. We had to run then we walked up there and ran back.

Me! do you remember what time school started and ended each day?

Mr. Manty! We left school at ah. Well we left home here about oh 8:30 and school would start about 9:00. And 9:00 till 12:00 and then we would run home and have to be back by 1:00, and we'd be all threw at. ah, it started at one we'd be all threw at 4:00.

Me! oh

Me! How did the kids dress?

Mr. Manty: ah, (ha, ha, ha) winter time warm (ha, ha, ha) I was different those days. I think the kids dress

nicer today. They have better (a) clothes than we had. Now a days the kids got patches on their clothes (uh now) if we had patches you had to have them, they were worn out. (ha, ha, ha)

Me! was there a dress code?

Mr. Manty: huh?

Me! was there a dress code

Mr. Manty: oh ya, they ah, we had to dress warm, cause it was a long way to go (you know)

Me! what kind of subjects were taught at that time?

Mr. Manty: I think ah, let's see now, pretty much same as you have today. But you have more of this modern stuff. now I think we had typing and shorthand up there. Although I didn't take it. But generally I think the subjects are pretty much the same. They changed I'm sure. But ah, do you have computers up there?

Me: ya

Mr. Manty: See that's something.

(10)

Me: what was your favorite subject?

Mr. Manty: My favorite?

Me: ya

Mr. Manty: I like Spelling. Ah, that was in the lower grades when we had that of course. And then I liked (ah) Geography, and History. History was one of my favorites.

Me: what subject gave you the most difficulty?

Mr. Manty: ah, I think algebra.^x

Me: oh, why?

Mr. Manty: I guess I was just a little dumb. (whisper)(Ha, Ha, Ha)

Me: ha, ha, ha

Mr. Manty: ah, well I suppose ah, one thing. I could of studied a little harder. (Oh know) we all say that when we get out.

Me: were there any special fads or sayings?

Mr. Manty: hmmm. any fads?

I'm trying to think now. Or what was the other one. Fads or what?

(11)

me! were there any special fads or sayings

Mr. Manty: no not really.

me! O.k. what kinds of punishments were given?

Mr. Manty: At the school?

me! ya

Mr. Manty: well ah, you know those days, if you were a mean kid the teacher would ah, he would give you one in the back of the head ya know.

(ha, ha, ha)

me! (ha, ha)

Mr. Manty! Now adays you don't do that. You don't touch no kid. And I don't think that was right anyway ya know. They were pretty rough in those days for punishment.

Me: Did you ever get hit? (12)

Mr. Manty: yes, there was a (ha, ha)

I can remember the grade
I was in fourth grade
But I wasn't the only one
the teachers hit. The geography
books were big ya know and
she hit me in the head a
couple of times, I know that
(ha, ha, ha)

Me: ha, ha, ha

Mr. Manty: I wasn't the only one. She
was kind of a mean teacher
ya, that was the only one
that I didn't really care for.

Me: What kind of extracurricular
activities were offered?

Mr. Manty: what?

Me: extracurricular

Mr. Manty: Oh, ah I played basketball
and ah we had a good team
the last year I played. In
fact we were the ONLY undefeated

team in Upper Michigan
in 1940.

(13)

Me: wow!

Mr. Manty: But we lost the final game
of the U.P. (By what?)

Me: Oh

Mr. Manty: ya, that's the only (haha) oh,
let's see what else. Well see at
that time basketball was the, was
kind of the only sport they had
up there ya know. Cause see, they're
wasn't to many kids. See now
when I graduated (ah, what?)

Me: did you start? were you a starter?

Mr. Manty: was I what?

Me: a starter?

Mr. Manty: Oh, ya, ya

Me: did any sport team win a
trophy?

Mr. Manty: oh ya, I don't know where
the trophies are gone. In
the old school, well the school
is still there but it used
to be in the second floor up there.

ah, I can't remember where (14) that was. But the, I know we had a second place trophy for the U.P. and we had one for the district in basketball. I'm trying to think of where those trophies are. Ah, see now when they reduced that to an eighth grade school. That's what it is now isn't it? When they reduced it to an eighth grade school I think they moved them trophies somewhere. I don't know where. Say I know where one is. In the arena in Marquette. And our basketball picture is there too. Hey I should have thought of that I could have them down here I would have one of Woody too. There was three of us boys and we all played basketball.

Me: what kinds of prog- (15)
rams or plays were staged when
you were in school.

Mr. Manty: ah, we used to have like ah,
in the spring they had a opera
ya, know. And then when we got
to be seniors we had ah, class
play, ya know when just members
of the class. We had ah, there
were 12 of us kids when we
graduated.

Me: ah, did you participate in any?

Mr. Manty: did I what?

Me: did you participate in any plays?

Mr. Manty: ya, I had a small part. I
was a, it wasn't too much.

Me: do you remember any humorous
or interesting stories?

Mr. Manty: I should be full them. I
suppose I'll be full of them
when you leave but I can't
think of them. Do you mean
about school

Me: ya, and plays

Mr. Manty: Oh, the plays (16)

Let's see I was a cop in the play I remember that ya, and ya know (ha, ha, ha) this is a good one. See when we put the play on we gave it for the high school in the afternoon ya see and then we gave it to the parents and that, for the parents. But I'll never forget this when we were performed before the kids in the school and I was a cop ya know when I walked in there the kids booed me. (ha, ha, ha)

Me! (ha, ha) what was lunch time like?

Mr. Manty: what?

Me! lunch time, you just went home

Mr. Manty! ya, but ah by the time we got here, ate, ran back and time to start again.

Me: um, did anybody eat (17)

lunch at school or did they have to go home?

Mr. Manty: ah, I tell ya what sometimes ah they had a lunch program there but it wasn't too often. These kids that used to come from Green Creek and all over ah, they used to take their lunch, and I think we used to take cars like if the weather was bad so we didn't have to come home. Ah, I guess you have lunches all the time now.

Me: ya

Mr. Manty: that's good.

Me: who was the principal when you were in school?

Mr. Manty: ah, Mr. Annala was the principal. George Annala ya and Mr. Bath was the superintendant.

Me: could you describe them?

Mr. Manty: ah, Mr. Annala was very strict you behaved yourself in his classes. But he was a good teacher. Very good teacher. Mr. Bath was

more on the easy going (18)
side, ya know But he was a nice
guy. He wasn't too strict. He wasn't
like Mr. Annala.

Me: Did you have lots of homework?

Mr. Mantyi: ya ah we had. I wouldn't
say lots of homework but ah,
I should've had more (ha, ha)
I should've studied more ya know
But ah we had homework just
about 2 or 3 times a week ya know

Me: do you remember any special
friends or any of your teammates?

Mr. Monty: I remember ah, (ha, ha) I don't
want to say this. There's ah, there's 1, 2,
3. There's three of those players, ah
that are gone (ya know) would
you know Portan Aho? Oh you
don't know him. He was the
star of our team. How about
the Keto's, Rolan and Warren
would you know them? No well
I suppose that we're such
old butts. Oh, the last couple of
years that I played we had ah,
we had some pretty good teams.

ya and we used to play 19,
against Ishpeming's first team. See
they had a main team and then they had a
junior high team or not junior high but
ah second field. And we used to never
have those scheduled games. And ah,
those days the scoring was low. The
last game that we played ah we lost.
ah the score was only 24 and 25.

Me: Oh my god! Were you able to make
contact with your childhood friends?

Mr. Manty: ah, ya. Like we had our reunion ya know.
And ah of course they're were a few
of them that passed on. But ah,
there was 7 of us that made it.
See we had our reunion down in
Florida ya know. Ya we went to
Orlando. And then we went to ah,
Bahamas with a boat trip for
3 days. And then we came back
and we went to Disney world, Epcot,
let's see now, studios MGM or whatever
they are, Universal. So we had a
nice time down there. And then
there was ah we spent a couple of
days visiting these people. This one
girl she had her 50th wedding

anniversary, and she was in our class, ah they built a new home down there, it's beautiful out there

(20)

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

Mr. Manty! Well, I would say ah Mr. Annala was one that. I suppose because he made us behave maybe that's why he kind of had an impact ya know. But ah, like I say he was strict but he was good. I will say this overall National Mine had good teachers we had all good teachers ya know for a small school and the kids turned out pretty good overall ya know. I'll show you a picture I got over there before you leave. I started working in Mine, I'm going to far hey?

Me! no, it's the next question.

Mr. Manty! is that the last question? Well like I say when I graduated I was 16 years old and my brother Martin was running the gas station, the building is still over here ya over by Brown's over there

Me! ya.

Mr. Manty! Do you remember, right over here

me: no
Mr. Manty: right over here? oh, well that (21)
used to be the gas station my
brother was running it and I
worked there for 3 years 16 to 18.
Then I started in the mine I
worked underground over here in
Ishpeming have you seen those 2
shaft houses?

Me! ya
Mr. Manty: I worked there for 20 years
underground

Me! wow!
Mr. Manty: Then I worked 23 years up here
on top.

Me! oh
Mr. Manty! so I had 43 years for Cleuland
Cliffs when I retired

Me! oh, do you have anything else you
want to add?

Mr. Manty! ya ah. let me think. I did
mention that the school system was
good we had good teachers. ah and
I think that today you have these
computers and all that which I
think that is good ya know more
modern ya know.

But ah in those days ah (22)
depression you heard of the depression
hey it was so poor times that ah
there were very few kids that could
go to college because nobody had the
money to go.

Me: did you?

Mr. Manty: ya, ya and today you can get
student loans which means a lot.
And ah I think today you have
a long ways for education ya know.
But ah I'm so afraid of these
drugs and that ya know if kids
get a hold of them and that's
terrible. See we never had those things.
Well ya we used to smoke when
we weren't supposed to be smoking
but that wasn't all that bad it
wasn't pot or anything we never
heard of pot. But ah I smoked in
school well not in school but ah
and then when we got out of
school I quit smoking ya, (ha, ha)
Me: (ha, ha) what was life like during
the depression?

Mr. Manty: ah, well I'll tell ya 23
what, we were ah ya know I
lived here all my life on this
same lot here and ah this is the
second house that's been here. The
old house where I was raised in
as a kid ah, ~~they~~ didn't tear that
down they moved it over there ah
it's ah 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 houses. It
used to be Frank Loncher house.
Would you know where that is?

Me! NO I don't think so.

Mr. Manty: Oh and ah well anyway, then
my dad built here he built this
place and that year was the
year that I graduated but ah
during the Depression ah we didn't
have no extra's ah like the kids
they got skate's they got ski's.
I remember we had 1 pair of
skates here and we all had to
use them but ah and the ski's
Oh god, the ski's I had. I made
a pair of ski's in school too.

which was ah, I was very fortunate ya know. There was one good thing we had a good manual training program up there. They would have all the lumber free, where all the other schools they had to pay for there lumber. But I getting back to the Depression now, we never had all the clothes that kids have today ah clothes were a lot of hand me downs ya know and ah but they were warm they had to be warm. But ah oh what was I going to say, Like I say we didn't have all those extra's that the kids have today and I mean there was nothing wrong with that but that was a bad time. And cars, there were no cars, hardly any cars out here. I remember when we used to go to town if we went ice skating we walked to the ice rink from here. Skate for 3 or 4 hours and walk back.

Me: Where was it? The skating rink
 Mr. Manty: ah, it's still up there ya know where the football field in Ishpeming.

Me: ya

Mr. Manty: ya, well, there's that skating rink right before you go in there.

me: ah, o.k. were you married?

(25)

Mr. Manty: ya ah, I'll tell ya what. I started working in the mine, I was 18 years old and my dad past away and I had 3 sisters that were still going school and I took care of my mother and 3 sisters cause I was in the mine. I took care of them so I was pretty old when I got married then see I took care of ma until she past away and I married at 50 years old. So ah I was married about 11 years and my wife past away it's been 5 years now. I retired in 85, June of 85 and she pasted away in September of 85. So it was alone. My retirement has been pretty quiet ya know, although my wife had 3 children and my 3 step children were very good to me, very good. In fact, the daughter is living in California, she's coming up here with her family for Christmas, and I been out to California 4 times now visiting them. In fact I've got a free ticket coming for 20,000 mile. Have you heard of frequent flyer?

me, no

(26)

Mr. Manty: you get 20,000 miles of flying
you get a free ticket round trip
anywhere in the United States. Well
anyway ah that was why I got
married late in life was see I took
care. I saw my 3 younger sisters
through school well of course when
they got through with school they
left home and I was left home
with my mother. But it is very
fortunate I was able to do ya know.

Me! I guess that's it, thank-you
very much for your time.

Mr. Manty: ya ah, I gotta show you that
mine picture. Woody is in there too.