

INTERVIEW: Done on December 12, 1990 with Elsie Mayhew.

Brief Background:

I recieved my education at Marquette after I graducated from Norway High School in Norway MI. I came to Marquette at the University here which was then called Northern State TEachers College. I graduated in 1929 with a teaching certificate but I continued on to school at the college until 1931, when I earned my bachelor of arts degree which was a four year course. My majors were English and French. My minor was History

WHAT YEARS DID YOU WORK AT NATIONAL MINE:

I came to National Mine in the fall of 1960. I stayed until the JUNE of 1973. Thirteen years. When I first got there I taught third grade for two years. I was then asked by the superintendent WALTER Bath to go on into the High schoo and junior High to teach their English program, which I did for several years. Then he asked me also to introduce the French course because there was there was no foreign language taught in the school at that time . It was required in order to get accreditation for the National Mine School that they have a foreign language at that time. So I went back to my studies for refersher courses ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ at the university so I would be prepared to teach the coming fall when he asked me to take up the subject so I did and with the refresher courses and the tapes(French) I was able to get back into teaching the first and second years of French.

WHAT DO you

I FORGot to tell about the library. Since I had worked in th college library for four years and a librarian was also needed at the National Mine at this particular time Mr. BATH asked me if I wouldn't also considered becoming the librian which I did and spent several hours in the library in addition to my teaching duties. I was responsible for the library ordering their books and being in the library with some student help.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR JOB

Well I always felt that the most important job was to see that the students learned That was I felt was my job to see that they knew something when they left the school. That it was the priority to study and to know what was being taught and prepare them to go out into world to face the world as it was and it was no laughing matter it was sincere the priority was to study and to know the material and to be well equipped when they left the school

HOW AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR CAREER:

I'd always thought I would make a good teacher and as a yougster we used to play school allot with the neighbor children their mother used *always*

wanted me to teach them so we always had school every night I was a babysitter and the mother would say why don't you have classes I was about five years older than her oldest child and there were three other children at that time in her family so she always thought it was good that her children were getting this tutoring really and it was fun for me and it was no problem and they were good children And the mother always said that my you should be a teacher you should teach those children so that was I knew that I could do it I liked it and children liked it too we made fun of it It was a fun thing we enjoyed it wasn't anythin that wasn't fun.

How and WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR CAREER  
HOW HAVE THE DUTIES OF YOUR JOB CHANGED

How have the duties changed well in the teaching field I don't know too much because i have been away for seventeen yuears I know that have been many changes because i found out that I had been out of school for I had been out of schoold for that long before i had went back to teaching that there were changes at that ~~long~~ time and I am sure that in the seventeen years i have been away from teaching that there have also been changes There are many new subjects being taught there are many new activities being introduced into the school' which we didn't have at that time and stress has been put on different subjects from what we were at that time the olden days we really stressed the reading writing and arthmetic. more so now they have many many other subjects that children or students can take But at that time we really stuck to our main ~~object~~ that was our main object was to see that they got the basics and they knew them well and of course since then they have added many different activities and that is the only change that I would see that I would know about

DURING YOUR CAREER WERE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY SPECIAL PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS OR EXTRA EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Well during my career I was also coaching plays in the school I ~~for five years~~ had the senior play you know. I coached that and since I was the ENGLISH teacher I also had the forensics The children were in forensics programs and I had to coach them also I had to prepare them for their contests. While I was an ENGLISH teacher I also considered they were part of my job.

DID YOU RECEIVE ANY SPECIAL TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB?

I was in training school I did do a little coaching of plays short plays and helping with the forensics as part of my teacher trainging and of course when I was in school myself I was in programs of that type too I was in plays and also forensics and I love that type of work it was easy for me and I enjoyed doing it and it seemed that the children enjoyed doing that type of work too especially the plays they really enjoyed that getting together and working on plays it was a fun thing for them too

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU BEFORE YOU COULD BECOME A TEACHER?

BEFORE I could become a teacher well it took four years, four full years. I had to study in order to get my bachelors of art degree. and I was happy that I had it because while I did not use it at the time right after I graduated because I got married the same year and married women teachers were not hired at that time it was a rule it was a law in fact that they could not teach once they were married so I since I was married I reared my family then six children I went into teaching only after my husband a severe massive heart attack and he survived for three years after that. but he was disabled for the three years before his death so I had to become the bread winner. So I knew I took the first job which was available which was at the Saint Michaels Procoial School and was in the third grade which I taught for two years and of course the pay in the Procoial shcool at that time was considerably less than in the public schools but it was convient for me because it was only six blocks from my school and I knew the students there and many of the people there and the administrators there and I liked it but as far as the monetary value it was I had to get something which paid more. So this opening came up at the National mine shcool and it was the third grade also so I had to commute 20 miles a day which was a difficult thing for me I found that one of the most difficult things to do was to have to commute that far from my home but I I managed very lightly and though I tried to get back into my home town to to teach They up at National Mine the superintendeant kept raising my salary and kept giving me different jobs to do and so I thought that I well I might just as well stay *and challenging jobs* where I am since I am you know I could overcome the problem of transportation I could put up with it I could cope with it though it was a hardship for me that was I found was the hardest thing to be commuting 20 miles Since then after I worked on my masters degree while I was teaching I came back after I had been out so long I thought it would do me good to go back and get you know add to my especially since I had started teaching so late That I should go back and get refresher courses and also earn my masters degree so I worked on masters degree until after I had retired from teaching After I retired from teaching I saw that I needed 1 credit to get my masters degree and I thought I'm not going to bother with it why I don't need it there is no reason for it but it just bothered me It made me feel bad to think I had gotten that close to getting a Masters Degree I thought why not so I did go back after I had graduated been out of school I went back and then in 1979 I did get my Masters Degree I was happy about that it was worth the effort

DO YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTING OR HUMOROUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED DURING YOUR CAREER?

Well many things happened while I was there but I was very serious about every thing it was a big responsibility and it came upon me suddenly which I didn't really expect and everything came upon me so suddenly like overnight I knew I had to do something right away immediately so I think that put me into a state of shock and it kept me working harder I knew I had to work especially hard if I want to get thru and get across what I was supposed to do and to do it well to do it the best way I knew how it took every ounce of my energy and strength I would say I did really have to work at it I couldn't I had to forego all of activities I knew I didn't have time for that I had to concentrate on my work and my family so I really I say that it was a difficult time but I enjoyed it I did enjoy doing it I can say I did really enjoy there wasn't much fun or pleasure time for fun or pleasure it was really a serious time for me

COULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR COWORKERS WERE LIKE

I found that the teachers and the administration and all the people who worked at the National Mine School at that time the cooks the helpers and the janitors and the bus drivers were all very friendly people and very cooperative and it was a great system to be in it was sort of like a family affair everyone seemed to be interested in everyone else and it was really that was a very happy time for me to be with those people

AT ANY TIME DID YOU FEEL LIKE CHANGING CAREERS?

No I thought that at my age when I had gone back that was enough of a career and if I could do that successfully that was about all I could do and that was what I concentrated on to try to do the best I could because I knew I started with the trauma of a death a sudden in the family and that really sort of froze seems I just froze I used to say that I felt that my blood had turned to ice just as though I was filled with ice and it took me a long time to overcome that and still keep my job going I knew that I had that responsibility and that kept me going and really the shock was greater than I would have anticipated I could not have anticipated anything that would have been so devastating

HOW DID THE COMMUNITY FEEL ABOUT NATIONAL MINE

How did the community feel about national mine  
The community I feel found was very responsive to the teachers and they were very supportive and anything we asked to do at any time they were willing but see they were willing and they were very helpful at times and ah i know that especially when anything was going on such as the plays we got a hundred percent support and all there sports activities got a hundred percent support and if there was any other other kind of situation which arose in which ~~arose in which~~ <sup>people needed help</sup>

with there tradgedy in the family or anything wich ther were several families had severe tradgedies while i was there we lost a girl died right in our school at the time a Ostala girl and differnt people other teachers were also widdowed, are cooks, one was also widdowed and differnt parents were widdowed some in tradgic accidents so it was really a sad time for many people but i found that they National Mine people were very simpithetic and supportive and they helped people in time of distress and sorow.

HOW HAS THE BUILDING ITSELF CHANGED:

the building

YA

ah since ive been there ive been told, I have never been up there but they added 2 rooms to the Natinoal Mine shooll that would be the elementry school, and they have distablished new highschool, a brand new school wich is a beautiful school I have been there to visit and it is a beautiful school. But i left a year before it was completed so i never got to teach in it in that new school.

HAVE YOU MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH FORMARE STUDENTS OR CO WORKERS.

I have met with them at reunoins as i said and this was a 20 year reunion wich i paticular remember um and um and I was really happy to have been invited.

UM

to there class reunion and i was happy to see uh those students and to see how well they had been doing and it made me happy to see that or ah made me feel that perhaps i had a part

UMH

and you know being succesful, and really proud and i was really proud of them. I was really proud of the students

IF YOU HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN, WOULD YOU CHOOSE THE SAME CARRER

I think i would be tempted to chose the same job and i think i would be more relaxed noe since ive had that experience behind me and the tramma wich happend early in my experience there. I think that i have overcome that and ajusted to that. Wich i wasen't able to emideitly. at that time it was to great of tramma for me to really give my all, beacuse i had that in the back of my mind i was simply devistated, i had been and i was devistated and i tried my best.

WHAT WERE YOUR BIGGEST RESPONSIBILITES ON THE JOB?

Well my responsibilites were i felt that the students would know the material and i could be proud of them when they left the school so they could face up to anyone who had the same amount of schooling that they did and that they could

be proud of them selves. I tried my best to stress the point that they were going out into the world and they had to be able to complete with the best and ah i had some very good students who would, im sure i know have done very well. And they have progressed very satisfactory.

WHO RESPONSIBLE FOR LIKE THE FRENCH COURSE THE STARTING OF THE FRENCH COURSE.

Yes the yes starting of the french course was a difficult thing because i had been away from the launguage and hadn't been with the launguage and hadn't done anything with it for over 20 years, and going back for there refresher courses and studing on my own and even i graduated oh im retiering i might say i went back for refresher courses. Because for my own benifit, I thought well that since i had the time then after i retired and i lived near the university and so i did go back so i enjoyed a couple more years of french and they were refresher courses but i went full time and enjoyed the teacher she was right from France and it was an excellent experience for me.

WHAT WERE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF NATINOAL MINE SCHOOL.

Well i found the people to be very as i said friendly and down to earth, and responsible people and imperish good hard workers and ah ah now would you ask that question again something escaped me

WHAT WERE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIERS

My fondest memoriars i would think

YOU SAID ABOUT GRADUATION

Yes at the graduation that many of the students wich some of my students wich i had a little difficulty with at times but they were good esentily they were good students but essentily at times they would sort of ah like to act up or you know it was difficult at times to disipline some of them. Some of the boys especilly were larger than i know when these large boys would be in classroom i was tearfull i didn't know what would happen. But then when they graduated i was very greatful because they thanked me for getting through / cry very touched / excuse me Are they snjoying it are they really laughing thats when i realize that they were enjoying it and then i think i had success coaching but thats what i would say that i would be happy about that when thay came and people seemed to appreciated the programs thats what i think.

DID THEY HAVE ANY DRESS CODES

At that time there was a limit to the skirt length and a  
i can't remember exactly what the limit was and also i  
recall about the blouses the blouses had to be worn inside  
the jeans shirts had to be worn inside the jeans and the  
girls skirts were only had to be a certian length they  
could not come to school in any shorter skirts than what  
the school code was. But it didn't last to long.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY

No i think thats about all you know if theres anything  
else you have my number

THANKS