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LORI OVIINK'S INTERVIEW  
WITH

Mr. Swanson

ME: Hello. This is Lori Oviink. The date is December 16, 1990. I am interviewing Steve Swanson. He's an ex-student of the National Mine School. We are at his home in West Ishpeming. I would like to ask you a few questions for a brief biographical sketch.

ME: When and where were you born?

Mr. S.: I was born in Ishpeming, September 24, 1950.

ME: How many brothers and/or sisters did you have?

Mr. S.: I have two brothers, my brother Kevin, who is 34 years old, he graduated from National Mine in 1974, and my brother Jack, who is 29 years old, living in Texas, and he graduated from Westwood, I think in '79. So. No sisters.

ME: When and whom did you marry?

Mr. S.: My wife's maiden name is Laurie Soderburg and we got married in April of 1977. We've been married going on 14 years.

ME: How many children do you have, and what are their names?

Mr. S.: 2 daughters, Jessica, and Jennifer. Both of them go to Ely School.

ME: When and where were your parents born, and what are their names?

Mr. S.: My dad, dad's name is Jack, He was born in Ishpeming, and my mom's name is Delores

Mr. S: She was born in Ishpemingtoo, I think. I shpping  
(cont) or Neegaunee.

ME: And what is your occupation?

Mrs. S: I work for Michigan Financial Corporation,  
which is a bank holding company. It owns  
seven banks in the U.P., and I'm marketing  
offices for the corporation.

ME: OK. Now we'll get on with the interview.

ME: What year, what years did you attend National Mine  
School?

Mrs. S: My whole school career. I graduated in 1970, so I  
went from kindergarten right through my senior  
year in high school.

ME: OK. Do you remember the names of some of your  
grade school teachers and what they were like?

Mrs. S: Sure, I remember the names of just about all of  
them, um, Mrs. Gleason, you want the ~~names~~ names  
of each grade or grade school?

ME: If you'd like give 'em, if you can remember.

Mrs. S: Mrs. Gleason was my kindergarten teacher.  
Mrs. Magnuson, my first grade, Mrs. Waara,  
second grade, Mrs. Mayhew, third grade, Mrs.  
Wasberg, fourth grade, um, here's where I'm  
getting foggy, I'm not sure if it was it was Mrs.  
Ketoo or Mrs. Johnson, fifth grade, and Mrs.  
Reusing sixth grade.

ME: Wow! Do you have any interesting or  
humorous stories about your grade school  
teachers?

Mrs S.: There's a lot of interesting things that happened, but uh, I guess probably the one thing that I remember most was just how um, how in charge all the teachers were, especially the women. They were expected the classrooms to be, to respect her as a teacher, I guess, they really believe in discipline, and for the most part none of the kids really stepped out of line. They were the boss in the classroom, and I guess I remember that most, they were really tough ladies, but they were nice women, but uh, they're very tough, and they expected everybody to tow the line.

Me: Yeah. um, Do you remember some of your Junior High and High School teachers?

Mrs S.: Yeah. um, Some of the same teachers are still teaching in the district, um, I guess, Mrs. Braamoe in particular, I remember because one year one of her dogs had a litter of puppies and I think six or seven of us from our grade all got a puppy that year. That was the first dog I ever had, so I remember that. um. You're catching me off guard here, I don't really remember all the names of them off ~~the~~ hand, even though I got 'em right in the back of my mind.

Me: Um, Do you have any interesting or humorous stories about them?

Mrs S.: about the teachers in the middle school?

Me: Yes

Mrs S.: Uh, no other than you know it's even today, it's still a tough age group to teach, you know, Junior High age kids, and I guess that just as kids are today, um, we probably were much the same as far as the changes we were going through,

Mrs S.: and just the energy we had, and the fact that you  
(cont) kinda inbetween, making the transition from  
gradeschool to high school, so um, no just that a  
lot of energetic kids and making probably a  
little more difficult for the teachers to try to  
teach at with that age.

ME: And what about your high school teachers?

Mrs S.: Um, well, quite a few of the high school teachers are  
still teaching in the school district here, Mrs. Hebert,  
Mrs. Chinn, Mrs. Keto, Mrs., well let me think now. Some  
of these people I haven't seen for so long, um, hmmm. I  
guess those few come to mind in particular. We didn't  
have, ya know National Mine wasn't that big a school.  
We didn't have as many teachers as ~~the~~ the high school or  
the grade school do today.

ME: What was your first day of school like?

Mrs S.: Well the first day was, you reluctantly go back, I  
guess, ya know you, as summer winds down you  
~~look forward to it~~ kind of, you look forward to it, but you  
didn't want to admit it, and with National Mine, a the  
kids living out 581, and the way the district was spread  
out, it was really nice to see all the kids you didn't  
see for the whole summer, ya know. It's not like today  
where kids get around a lot more. The parents drive them  
here and there, and stuff like that, or they have their own  
cars in high school, and whatnot. Um, it was just  
really nice to see some of the kids that you didn't see  
for the whole summer.

ME: And how long was your schoolday?

Mrs S.: I don't remember exactly. It's probably  
fairly similar to what it is today. Um, ya know from  
I suppose eight till 2:30. Eight till 3 o'clock maybe

Mrs: it was, and actually if you had extra curricular (cont) stuff that was, ya know, in which I participated in throughout high school especially, um, I always was after school, ~~for something it seemed~~ ya know, for something it seemed all 5:00 or 5:30 anyway.

Me: Yup. How did you get to school each day?

Mrs: They used to have, living right in National Mines itself, in the metro area, um, up until sixth grade they had a bus that would pick up the kids down in the location, and then after sixth grade we had to walk to school.

Me: How far did you have to walk each day?

Mrs: It was about a mile, and uh actually one of the things I remember most about that was once you got to the walking stage, uh, ya know, despite the kind of weather we have in the U.P., ya know, most of us never wore hats or gloves or boots, ya know, ~~no time~~ no time during the winter.

Me: And what kind of subjects were taught?

Mrs: Well we didn't have, you're talking high school now?

Me: Yeah, junior high, high school.

Mrs: Ya know, I think for the most part the same things, I mean English, math, science, history, all these things still remain. um. We didn't naturally on the high school level, being a small school, like that, we didn't have anything near the variety of courses that you do nowadays. Um, ya know just the types of skills that students need today requires that ya know a lot of these other courses be there and there's just a lot more special types of courses for kids with special interests, but we had a real basic, ya know, fundamental type education. You got everything you needed to go on to college or to get a good education.

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Mrs S: to, to just get a job anywhere but uh we didn't have  
(cont'd) a lot of special classes, and we didn't have a lot of, uh,  
just a lot of variety in curriculum, it was very sound  
fundamental type courses.

Me: How long was a class period?

Mrs S: I don't remember for sure, it's been 20 years. I  
probably didn't remember a year after I graduated,  
but probably 45 minutes to an hour long. I think for  
the most part they were always about an hour long or  
just short of an hour.

Me: What was your favorite subject and why?

Mrs S: Well, like most kids in school at that level you don't  
really have that many favorite subjects, ya know, 'cause  
it's not cool to be, uh, enjoying your classes sometimes, but  
uh I guess stuff, I never was really crazy about lots of  
parts of English type stuff that you get, but I did like to  
write ~~at~~, um, in natural History, and some of the Science courses  
I really enjoyed because ~~that~~ that was something, ya know,  
now that you were learning as you got older. Each level you  
were at you learned new things and uh, History, ya know,  
uh whether it's history about this area or history about another  
country, or history about the world that was always something  
that was interesting to me.

Me: What was your most difficult subject and why?

Mrs S: Um, I think math courses once you got into the higher level  
math courses, my heart really wasn't in it, um, I didn't  
enjoy it because I really didn't see that I was going to be using  
trigonometry and calculus and stuff like that anywhere down  
the road, and I just had a hard time being enthusiastic about  
math after geometry because I didn't, I couldn't, I wasn't  
really convinced that it was going to be that important to me,  
ya know, I didn't know. I think probably just the math  
classes uh, the upper level math classes.

Me: Yeah. How were kids expected to act and behave?

Mr S.: Well, we talked, I mentioned discipline a little earlier, I think, it was expected that you were there to learn, ~~you know~~ you were there to, ya know, live by whatever rules the school had. You were there to live by the classroom rules, you were there to respect not only the school, and the teachers and the students who wanted to learn in the classroom, um. I guess that was the main thing that comes to mind is that, um, you're there for a reason. You are there to, to learn and that's ~~what~~ what's expected and uh, there was most of the teachers, uh, really believed in discipline in the school and in the classroom and they weren't afraid to let you know who's in charge, and a I think for the most part, most students understood that and respected it.

ME: What punishments were given?

Mrs S.: Well, you got muscled around a little bit, depending on, ~~who~~ ya know, especially if you were a boy I guess who wasn't willing to tow the line, um, I think, ya know, the suspensions are kind of the same but you get suspended if you're proved that you're the kind of person who isn't able to live within the rules, well there's only one way to deal with it, and that's if your parents, working with the parents didn't get the kids to uh, cool themselves down, uh, ya know, you earned yourself a suspension for a couple days.

ME: How did the kids dress? Was there a dress code?

Mrs S.: Um, there was a dress code when we got into I guess Junior High. Um, you have to understand that the styles and the trends when I went to school, not that it's that long ago, but most of the years I went to school you didn't see the real drastic changes of styles from one year to another in a lot of hot, ya know, new types of clothes and things coming in, but up until like junior high, we were able to wear jeans, ya know, if you wanted to and a from um. Junior high on and high school you weren't allowed to wear jeans. You weren't allowed to wear anything that was, ya know, real casual, ya know, most of the stuff was

Mrs S: um, ya know, you're, you're basic type clothing pants, shirts, sweaters, the girls couldn't wear pants or shorts, ya know anything like that; they had to wear skirts or dresses everyday, and so you weren't allowed to wear a lot of casual stuff like ya know nowadays, ya know, you can wear T-shirts and you can wear jeans and all that kind of stuff, and even in the past years we have allowed longer shorts in the dress code so. It was a lot stricter, but it wasn't totally strict were you had to wear uniforms or something they just there were certain things that uh that's the way then, ya know, everywhere for the most part.

Mz: Were there any fads and/or sayings when you were young?

Mrs S: Yeah. Ya know there's so many of them I wish I had some other friends sitting here so we could, ya know, that's the easiest way, a lot of times when you're sitting, talking with friends you went to school with the stuff comes out real natural were you start throwing out the sayings or expressions or whatever that, ya know, we all used to say, um, looking back I can't remember a lot of the expressions from college or high school or whatever, ya know growing up in the 60's when, ~~ya~~ ya know, Vietnam and there was a lot of a, just a lot of change in our society and people, um, ya know had a lot more freedom or were, took the freedom to express themselves in ways that was just different from what was historical in this country, and so it was kind of a radical time, ya know, when you're young you're influenced by a lot going on, ya know not just local but nationally and the stuff you hear in the media and read about, and um, ~~it's~~ it's just like you who probably looks at people like Madonna and people that are really popular that way and ya know, there's certain things about all these personalities that you ~~do~~ admire and, ya know, when you're younger you tend to, ya know, emulate things that you see happening elsewhere and, ya know, that's how I think fads move, ya know, people see things happening somewhere



Mrs. (cont) else and somebody starts it locally and before you know it everybody in the school is doing it but, ya know, far out, and groovy and uh, stuff like that, ya know, is probably from that, that time, those kinds of sayings but, uh. I'll throw some in here as we go along if I remember them.

ME: And what kind of music did you listen to?

Mrs.: Beatles, number 1, um, the Beatles were my favorite just like, ya know, rock and roll, again the times of the sixties were alike, rock and roll really came into its own and changed from kinda that late 50's, early 60's stuff, ya know, there was just such a transition, ya know, alot of it had to do with the change in the culture, and values, and the social fabric of the country, I guess, ya know, youth expressed themselves in a lot of ways that they never did, ~~in~~ generations before, so. A lot of rock and roll, the Beatles, Rolling Stones, ya know, all the English groups that were really popular, Bob Dillon, ya know, he, ya know Bob Dillon and the Stones and the Beatles ~~was~~ I still enjoy listening to them, um, but Bob Dillon probably was my favorite person, favorite singer, ya know, as a single type act, I still is, ya know, all of his songs had a message, about the times and he's still writing songs today that are talking about life in general.

ME: What kinds of extra curricular activities were there?

Mrs. Um well in the sports, we didn't have football, we had baseball, basketball, basketball, and track, and I participated in all of those and uh, also forensics, and high school plays, ya know, there was a junior and senior class play and I participated in both of those, and forensics a little bit, we got forced into it by Mrs. Hebert. We had this, we had this group, ah presentation, I don't even know what it's called and it was probably seven or eight boys that were forced to do it, and we took it as a total joke and we were a bunch of jerks and we never did compete, ya know, we sort of got told that we weren't deserving it, ya know, being in

Mrs S.: any kind of competition and whatever, but um, ~~that~~  
 (cont) ya know, just mainly there wasn't alot of extra  
 curricular, not as many as there is at Westwood for  
 instance, but there was no extra curriculars for  
 girls, ya know, for what that's worth to this interview,  
 to speak of as far as sports go, that was before, ya  
 know, the whole sports movement happened for  
 girls in the high school level.

ME: Did any of the teams win a trophy or a tournament?

Mrs S.: Um, my Junior year or my sophomore year in high school,  
 I played varsity basketball for Gordy Chinn, he was the coach,  
 right out of college my freshman year and my sophomore  
 year we won a district tournament and as far as I remember  
 that probably was the only oh, type of award so. I don't  
 remember us ever winning ~~the~~ conference or any of ~~the~~  
 other sports or any other tournaments. They didn't have  
 as many tournaments then either, and some sports, or as many  
 meets, in for track we didn't have as many meets,

ME: Yeah, What effect did this have on the school?

Mrs S.: The extra curriculars?

ME: Yeah.

Mrs S.: Well, for one thing being a small school with a  
 small student body, everybody was really able to  
 participate in something, if they wanted to, um, that  
 was anything that you get into a larger school, and  
 especially in sports, the sports that don't have the bigger  
 teams, um, it's a lot tougher to make a team, maybe, and this  
 way we had just about anyone who wanted to play or to  
 participate in something, could, if they wanted to, and I still  
 think it's that way, you have a lot more to choose from now,  
 but, it had an effect I think, especially when you live in kind  
 of a rural area, the district is still the same, it's a bigger  
 district now, but it was the same, National Mine was the same  
 as NICE district is now, people were spread out, uh, people  
 live in areas where you don't really have neighbors and  
 neighborhoods, and that type of things so. The extra curriculars  
 really was the fun part about going to school. You ask me what  
 the things, ya know, the some of the stuff that you remember, well,

M.S.: ~~being~~ going to school was going to school and getting an education, but the extra curricula is really, was the fun part, ya know, the kinds of things you remember more, because, ya know, you were doing things with friends, and you didn't have to study for tests and stuff like that, ya know, it was just the fun part that was kind of the icing on the cake, but to make school worth going to, for, for a lot of kids, ya know, and working hard enough to get the grades to be eligible.

ME: What about when you won a tournament, how did that affect the school?

M.S.: The same as you see nowadays, anytime ah, a school has success in sport or forensics or whatever it is, um, there's a lot of pride, ya know, a lot of people who when you have good teams or good groups of kids who are representing the district, the parents get more involved, there's a lot of pride that comes out and then the community starts to support them, ya know more and more people turnout and uh, it seems to, to rally, ya know, there's a, it's just a bifactor that it pulls a school district together in a lot of ways that um, ya know, no matter how you work you just can't accomplish that by doing certain things, ya know, pride and and those types of achievements, tend to be easier to make people feel pride in the school district.

ME: How did the team travel, and how far did they go?

M.S.: Well, we travelled by bus ~~to~~ just like it is now. ~~It~~ This is beyond horse and buggy days and we for the most part played against teams in Marquette County, Marquette, Dickenson, um, Marquette and Dickenson Counties I guess especially. We used to travel, different years we travelled as far west as Burgland ~~and~~ in the U.P. um, and they used to have us, uh, they don't have a high school anymore, I guess Ulen Trout Creek or Ulen, um we went down as far as Penbyne, Wisconsin and Carne, and a lot of schools like that, a lot of the schools that we played against in high school aren't there anymore, they're all consolidated for instance Hermansville, and Powers we played against each of them they're now North Central, and we played against uh, Doly up in the Copper Country, and they

Mrs: I think those students go to Hancock now, and we played a-  
 (cont) gainst Zelenand Channing which are North Dickenson, O,  
 Republic and Michiganamee, we played against Champion,  
 one of our biggest, our biggest rival Champion, and now  
 they're part of the N.I.C.E. School District, so, it's kind of  
 interesting, all these small schools, and yet, <sup>Chapel</sup> ya  
 know, we played up there, at least in high school.  
 A lot of the communities that are still there, but they're  
 just a part of a bigger school system.

ME: Hmmm. Who was the principal when you were a student and  
 can you describe him?

Mrs: I guess, Mr. Rusing who remained as principal at  
 National Mine until just a couple of years ago, was the  
 principal for quite a few years. Early when I first  
 started at National Mine as an elementary kindergarten teacher  
 Mr. Lindberg was the principal, and he was one of the  
 administrators at Westwood when it first was formed.

~~Describe~~ Describe him, he was also my sixth grade teacher,  
 um, if I have to think of one teacher who I remember  
 most as far as the classroom, um, I guess it's probably  
 him, um, we did ~~some~~ really neat projects in the class-  
 room, um, where we would incubate, we incubated eggs  
 right from the stage where they were laid to over the sev-  
 eral whatever the period was and at different, ya know,  
 every couple days we would break one open to see what  
 kind of development was taking place and then at the end  
 we had quite a few chickens and ducks that were hatched,  
 and I always remember that 'cause that went on for  
 so long and it was a science project where you had to  
 look at just what was happening inside that egg, ya know,  
 every couple days, and draw, I think I still have the, ya  
 know, the booklet of all the artwork and stuff we did. That  
 was really neat and then History, he just had a way about  
 teaching that made it, ya know, I remember, um,  
 History classes in particular where my impressions  
 of ~~of~~ European countries and stuff, certain things  
 made a lot of sense to me then when they didn't before.

Mrs S: ya know, you dont have a lot of recollections from elementary school, at least I dont. I remember certain things, but as far as one teacher that, ya know, something different or more interesting in the classroom, it was the kinds of things we did in his class in sixth grade.

Me: Um, can you describe your textbooks?

Mrs S: No, they were, you had a textbook for each course, ya know, just like you do today and periodically I suppose they updated the books through the years, a lot of them hung around for a long time, ya know, depending on the course, they really didn't get outdated or any-thing. It was a lot of, ya know, textbooks that uh, I remember that Bunny Bread always distributed book covers so, to the books stayed in pretty good shape and they expected you to keep them in good shape so, um, nothing really that signif-icant to remember about the books other than we had them and we used them.

Me: Yup. How much homework did you get usually?

Mrs S: Uh, at the time it probably seemed like a lot, once you get to college you realize it wasn't hardly anything, um, ya know, at different times, depending on how dedicated, you were, I guess, or how interested you were in doing well or trying to learn, you know, you probably did more than ~~most students~~ some students, but for the most part there wasn't that much, that much homework, 'cause you also had study halls in junior high, high school. You could get a good part of the work done in the study halls, and uh, then you could take pride, one of the things that've ~~talked~~ talked about what was faddish or trendy well back then, maybe is still a "fash now, to be able to say" I never took a book home all year" or "I hardly ever take a book home," so that's what a lot of kids like to say. I never took a book home or I didn't study for the year. Those were the kinds of things that were cool then.

Me: What was your lunchtime like?

Mrs S: Great, ya know the ah, the lunchtime, ya know, lunchtime now is the same as lunchtime then except that the hot lunch program was excellent, they had such a good selection of meals that they would rotate, so many different things.

Mrs S: The one thing I didn't like ~~was~~ throughout the years was  
 (cont) Spanish rice. That's the one thing I remember I  
 never could develop a taste for. There was a lot of  
 good meals and um, by the way, talking to some of the  
 kids over the years since I've been in school. The  
 meals aren't as good anymore, but um, we had a  
 lot of hot lunches.

ME: How much did the hot lunches cost?

Mrs S: I don't remember for sure what it ended up costing,  
 what it was in high school, but I'll always remember  
 my mom used to give me, um, I think it was a dollar,  
 a dollar fifty a ticket for ten lunches, or was it a  
 dollar seventy-five. She used to give me money to  
 buy two tickets at a time, when I was in elementary,  
 I think it was either three fifty or three seventy-five, three  
 fifty. It must have been a dollar ~~seventy~~ seventy-five for  
 ten lunches, so we buy two tickets for twenty total lunches  
 at a time, ya know, twenty total lunches at a time, so,  
 Seventeen and a half cents for a lunch ticket, and it's  
 eighty-five cents today. It hasn't changed that much in  
 thirty years.

ME: Where was the cafeteria?

Mrs S: The cafeteria now is. I'm not sure what the room  
 is, um, do you know where the kitchen is in National  
 Mine, still there at the bottom of the stairs, near the  
 flagpole end of the building. The lunch room was  
 originally across the hall there in whatever that room is  
 in National Mine. Do you know where I mean?

ME: The art room?

Mrs S: Probably, and then we kind of ~~outgrew~~ outgrew  
 that room and they moved it ~~to~~ and it ended up  
 being held in the gym for several years the last  
 junior high and high school. The elementary years  
 it was in that room across from the, where the kitchen  
 is. Right next to the office.

ME: That's the art room.

Mrs S: O-kay.

ME: Um, can you please describe your recess?

Mrs S: Recess? Chass, I mean it was a chance to burn off energy, and we did so many neat things, um, we made the most of it. There was never a recess that was even not fully utilized, ya know, ~~from~~ from the time you flew out of the door to the time you, the bell rang, I always remember being caught far enough away from the school where you hear the bell and you're like a couple hundred yards away ~~from the school~~ and it was a mad rush to get in there but, we did a lot of things, a lot of roughhousing type stuff, snowballs, in the winter, stuff like that, ya know, just a lot of different types of games, running games and stuff, a lot of fun.

Me: Were there any strict rules to follow?  
 Mrs S: On playgrounds?

Me: Playgrounds, just in the classroom.  
 Mrs S: Um, when you're going ~~to school~~ ~~and probably any rules you have~~ you have you consider strict I suppose. It depends on the people enforcing them, um, I don't remember a lot of rules other than the fact that the rules that you had were much the same today, I think, to the administrators and the teachers, their job was to try to maintain order and to ~~maintain~~ make it a good environment for learning, and just stuff like that. We knew you knew what the rules were and where you stepped over the line, and uh, those were the only rules is to maintain order, and to respect everybody else, not just the teachers but your fellow classmates. You're there for a reason and that reason is to, to learn.

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

Mrs S: Well, they used to have in high school two ceremonies, the first one was on like a Sunday or whatever. I think it was a Sunday evening. It was called ~~stuff with candles and you had to show up~~ <sup>where they did some</sup> and it was a, it was strictly ceremonial, I don't remember the purpose of it and they don't do it anymore. Graduation you'd come marching

Mrs S.: in with the same song they pop in circumstances that they play for graduations today and you would have a validictorian address and a salutatorian, address and a couple other students from the class would talk about different things that were timely, I guess or appropriate for the class and ya know, the um, the, I remember Mr. Pussing I believe speaking at graduation, he was principal then. He would have an administrator who would orchestrate the whole thing and serve as master of ceremonies and he would have the awarding of the diplomas by the school board or somebody from the school board and ya'd march out again.

Me: And your diploma was handed to you by...

Mrs S.: Elmer and who's a fellow board member of mine now, and we only had nineteen students in our class so it didn't take a long time to march in and march out. We ~~walked~~ walked really slow.

Me: What special memories do you have of graduation?

Mrs S.: Graduation, uh, ~~nothing~~ nothing that special really. I think the fact that, I shouldn't say that, nothing unique happened at the ceremony or anything like that or exercises. But, just the fact that the realization and it really isn't driven home till you get days and weeks and months after high school graduation, but the sense of accomplishment that you finally reached the end of the line at National Mine, after you're there for thirteen years it um, ya know, you realize that this is it no more schooling at National Mine, you're happy that you've graduated from high school. I think anybody who is growing up, you're always wishing a lot of times wishing that you're older, you can hardly wait to be older where you have more freedom to do this and that, to be your own person and um, get a job or go to college, get out of the house, and gets some space and be treated more like an adult. I think that's probably the thing I remember most, not just myself, but everybody, it was typical that you felt you finally reached the point where you're going to become an adult, where you



Mrs: felt like an adult, and hoped you'll be treated like one, you  
 (cont) knew your life was going to take a change because you weren't going  
 to be, a lot of the kids weren't going to be sitting in a classroom,  
 didn't plan to go to college or whatever, or if you're going to col-  
 lege you were able to specialize in an area where your  
 interest was, rather than hafta take this or hafta take that, so.  
 I think just, some uh, not just happy that you're done but  
 uh, also you're, I think there's also a kind of a sadness when  
 a lot of the kids graduated, you know that you're not going  
 to be close to a lot of the friends and the people in the school any  
 more, you're not going to see a lot of these people so. You  
 know that life is changing of for you, that uh, things are  
 going to be different but, it's a sense of accomplishment and  
 it's time to accept the next challenge.

ME: And there's always a next challenge.

Mrs: That's right, there always is. You find out really quick when  
 you go to college or get into the work force or you try, you  
 have to start taking care of yourself or not relying on  
 your parents and stuff to do things for you.

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

Mrs: Some of them, ya know, I think one of the things that takes  
 a long time to realize when you get out of school is that a lot  
 of the kids, ya know, the kids you grow up, they, it's like  
 dust to the wind, they go in different directions, even though  
 you may only live a mile away or less than a mile  
 away or five miles away, people go to different walks of  
 life and um, ya know, people get married and naturally  
 when you get married um, I think most people are like my  
 family here, your immediate family, your children  
 become your most important, the most important  
 people in your life in addition to the other family  
 members that you have, but, your world isn't as broad  
 then as when you're single and you got your buddies, and  
 growing up, people you know and when you're in that

M.S.: school environment you're around each other day after (cont) day after day, you're forced to be around each other, and, ya know, you're almost forced to get along because it's not, it just doesn't work as well if you don't get along, and being at a small school like National Mine everybody knew everybody, even elementary, you knew who the kids were anyway, by name and stuff and you knew the families. The families didn't change that much over the years but uh, I don't, haven't maintained contact with a lot of them but, I a lot of them I have, that you see, these in the same situation as me, their families are their priorities and it's something that takes a long time to realize, that life is different when you get into adulthood, especially when you have your own family, ya know, it's just a lot tougher to maintain those ties and yet it's always fun to get together with people you went to school with. Yesterday at the gas station I bumped into a friend of mine who was one of my best friends through high school, and I hadn't seen him in a few years. He lives in National Mine and so, it's really, it's always fun to meet people that you can talk to about things you have in common, and when you went to school for 13 years at National Mine, believe me that's something that you have in common that will just always be there.

ME: Did you have any teachers that had a great impact on your life?  
 M.S.: Uh, I can't think of anyone teacher who had more impact than a-

rather maybe. I think there are some that made more of an impression on, ya know, when you're in high school and you're not really sure what you want to do with your life, ya know, I think if you had a particular area of expertise or a certain subject that really turned you on, then that would probably be in part of the ~~teacher~~, because of the teacher you had. We didn't have a lot of variety in the curriculum like we talked about, ya know even, ya know we had one English class ~~on the high school level~~ for instance, on the high school level in each grade level, whereas now you have several to choose from, and same with all the other areas, and um, some people that you spend a lot more time around um, I mentioned Mr. Ruesing, he was someone who was in the school system for all those years and he impacted students both

Mr. S. as a teacher and as an administrator when he became (cont.) principal. I remember, I have a lot of memories of him, alot of good memories of him. I don't have any negative memories of any teachers really, um, I guess Mr. Chinn he had an impact in, because I spent so much time around him. He, when I was a freshman, he was right out of college at Northern and he came in to teach so you were taught by him and then he also coached basketball and track initially and he ended up coaching baseball as well and so basically for the whole year you had him in the classroom, you had him in your classes and you also had him as a coach so, somebody like that definately has an impact on you um, ya know, and, uh, it's people like that that you remember more, it's people you were around spent alot more time around and uh, I think collectively they had a positive impact on me, I have good memories of the teachers at National Mine over the years um, there isn't one that really stands out but, I think as a group, yea they were a good bunch of people. They were, always treated me fairly and I always respected them, I think. I don't think I caused any problems for any of them, so. I had good memories of the teaching staff.

M: Did you have any special yearly picnics or outings?

M.S: No. There really wasn't alot of that and that's a shame. You think back at some of the things that you should have done or maybe you wish would have happened. There's alot more stuff that goes on today, alot more stuff that they organize themselves, but there's just alot more activities and that's one of the things that, there was school dances from time to time but, uh, in my years there never was a prom and stuff like that and we never had, we never had much in the way of dances, that was one of these things that it wasn't too cool to dance if you were a guy too. Lots of ~~peer~~ peer pressure ~~not~~ not to dance even though you like music but uh, I made up for all of that when I got into college but there wasn't alot of things. We had a senior class trip, that was kind of traditional thing where you had some um, people that went along as chaperones, Mr. Johnson who is still teaching at National Mine, and his wife were our chaperones, and we had a good time. We went down to this place in Wisconsin for a couple of days and the Ebon, Ebons class, senior class, happened to be there at the same time and we just got goofy for a couple of days. It was kind of a

Mrs: way to get away from the school and spend a little bit of time  
(cont.) with the students again who, approaching graduation, just  
weren't going to spend much time with you. A lot of them

Me: Did any tragedies occur while you were in school? And  
can you describe them?

Mrs: Um, I remember one in particular, I think we were in the  
eighth grade and one of our fellow students a girl by the name  
of Patricia Ustila, Patty Ustila, um, she died. I don't remember  
what she died from, but she collapsed in school one day,  
and then she died. I don't remember if she died right in  
school or if she ended up dying in the hospital but that, I  
still remember that, and going to the funeral home, I think  
that was the first time I had ever gone to a funeral home and  
our whole class was there, for the service and everything,  
and to, to see somebody dead, it, it was different, I guess I've  
always been able to accept the fact, it's tough to accept  
death but, um, it's reality too, ya know, we live and we  
die it was different, I think at that age it's hard to, it's a  
lot more difficult to comprehend what death is all about,  
or not that you ever fully understand it but uh, that was a  
tragedy I guess that I remember, ya know, trying to  
understand that here's this young girl 12, 13 years old,  
whatever she was and uh, one of our classmates, and  
just, like that she died um, it's a sobering, one of those  
experiences in life that ya know, especially when you're  
young and the only thing on your mind is having fun  
and you don't carry the weight of the world around,  
around you uh, it kind of makes you grow up a bit  
when you have those types of experiences and realize that  
there's a lot more to life besides having fun.

Me: What do you think is the biggest change in school since  
you were a student?

Mrs: The biggest change, um, the fact that education's more  
important now than it ever was, much more important.  
There's not too many jobs in this country in this world any  
more that would be considered the types of jobs that you'd want  
to have that aren't somewhat depended on education and  
wether it's a blue collar job or a white collar job, um or a special  
skill or craft, technology's so much, so much a factor

Mr. S.: these days. Technology is changing so much quicker, from year to year (cont.) and decade to decade, that the kinds of skills that have to be taught in the schools today, um, and the kind of background the students have to get is so much more technical and it's so much more important that students take learning and getting a good education seriously because they're really going to be at a disadvantage, um, you don't have, you can read a lot of stuff throughout this country and we don't have the ~~same~~ problems up here that they do in other parts of the country, especially in the cities but, um, unless you have an education that's sound and you really don't have the same kind of opportunities and you definitely don't have the same kind of a chance to live the kind of lifestyle that most kids kind of dream about having in this country, so education is, it's a lot more advanced. You still have the basics and that type of thing but there's a high, I think you have a lot higher percentage of people who are taking um, education more seriously today because they have to, they have to just to open up doors and opportunities for themselves.

Me: What are your fondest memories of National Mine?

Mrs. S.: Friends, all the people, ya know, being around the same people for that many years um, the fact that you didn't make the transition from grade school to middle school to high school. You're in the same building for all those years and all these, growing up <sup>in</sup> that National Mine area and the same friends I grew up with I went to school with and a lot of them we still live in this area and um, just the fun, ya know, the fun of knowing these all these characters you grow up with and personalities and going to school with them and making school enjoyable when at times school didn't uh, fire ya up or really appeal to ya, you didn't, if you couldn't get interested in the classes uh, the friends and the people you went to school with always made it enjoyable.

Me: Oh, Okay. YES to flip it.

Me: If you had a message for students today what would it be?

Mrs. S.: It's just like we talked about, take your, take your schooling seriously, not to the point of being preoccupied with pulling the grades but to learn, to go to school for the purpose of listening to what your parents, what your teachers are telling you, that you're there to get an education and really take it to heart to try to learn something everyday you go to school and to learn to enjoy learning. I think the biggest problem a lot of kids have is that they, they fight wanting to learn, they're putting a little bit of effort into it and put, put effort into learning, put effort

Mrs S: (cont) into enjoying yourself in school um, regardless <sup>of</sup> whether in the grade school or elementary or middle school or high school to enjoy going to school, it's such a, to be able to look back; There's so many good things that are happening to you, ~~some of~~ so many opportunities and, ya know, I ~~think~~ think a lot of people will look ~~back~~ back at their education and realize that they didn't take advantage or they didn't, of what was available to them, they didn't take it as serious as they should have at times, they didn't make it fun, they didn't participate in the different things that are available but, to, to really, um, cherish the fact that you have a lot of opportunity available to you when you're in school and to try it all, ya know to really enjoy it, to make the most of it and, I ~~think~~ think that anybody who approaches education to experience the whole range of things that are there and to enjoy doing it, to have fun and to make a lot of friendships and to realize that you're there for a purpose and I think they'll benefit from it and they're probably going to have ~~some~~ fond memories of their education.

Me: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Mrs S: No. I guess um, looking at National Mine I wish that programs like Red Dust here, ya know, those are the kinds of things that you're going to remember or your class is going to remember just like when we hatched the eggs in sixth grade, projects that are like the Red Dust project that are unique and different and challenge you to do something different than maybe you've done in your education up to this point. These are the kinds of things that you're going to remember and um, I just, given that it's the seventy-fifth anniversary of the National Mine School I ~~think~~ think, ya know, we talked about fond memories and stuff like that, ya know, things you remember most um, the school has a lot of history um, it was very rural community for years um, not a lot of jobs in the area, people led relatively simple lives and yet growing up in National Mine and the people you went to school with are all from the same kind of background and never do I remember a sense of going without, ya know, we didn't have that much, any of us in our

Mrs S: families, extra things, ya know, we didn't have a lot of stuff available to us out in National Mine and most of our spare time in the summer ~~is~~ uh, ya know, you spent in National Mine, different activities and sports and stuff you didn't, there wasn't shopping malls and stuff like that, you didn't, ya know, there just wasn't that much available but, there was just a great place to be raised as a child. It was a wonderful childhood. It was a good upbringing to, to be in that environment ~~is~~ <sup>life</sup> was simpler in a lot of ways, more innocent, um, we grew up in a time when there was a lot of change in country and change in youth looked at things in this country, ya know. it was a whole variety of things and yet just all fond memories. It was a great place to grow up and go to school because of uh, the kids were the same year after year, you knew them all, you spent time with them away from school and you were around each other in school.

Me: That's it?

Mrs S: Yup! that's it.

Me: I'd like to ~~thank~~ thank you your interview and your time and hope the story makes the book.

Mrs S: I thank you for being interested in interviewing me. Hopefully I did the class of 1970 justice on this.