

Aric Sundquist's Interview  
with  
Clifford Trudell

①

me: I'm Aric Sundquist inside Mr. Trudell's house.  
When and where were you born?

mrT: I was born right in National mine and I wasn't  
born in a hospital, I was born at home back in the days  
of midwives.

me: How many brothers and sisters.

mrT: Well, there was seven of us. I had four brothers and  
3 sisters

me: When and whom did you marry

mrT: Well I married Anne Salo and we lived in Ishpeming,  
The city of Ishpeming and she went to school in Ishpeming.

me: Do you have any kids

mrT: Yeah, we had five and ah, ~~two~~<sup>three</sup> boys and 2 girls

me: What are their names.

mrT: Well, the oldest boy was Doug, the oldest girl was Nancy  
and then comes Theresa, then Pauly and then Scott.

me: I think my sister knows Scott, Westwood

mrT: Yeah

me: Um, what are your parents names

mrT: Well, my dad's name is Clifford also and my mother's name  
Maud

me: Where were you born



mrt: Well my dad, uh, was born and raised in the city of Ishpeming and my mother was raised in National Mine.

me: OK, ah, what years did you attend National Mine

mrt: Ah, I think it was what forty I think I started kindergarten in 4th and I graduated from National Mine in 1956.

me: Can you like, remember any of your teachers.

mrt: Oh yeah, I think I remember just about all of them when I went to school, I don't know I think things have changed a little bit, all the lower grades all the way up through the 6th grade you had the same teacher all year long and you didn't change the classes and when you started in seventh where you had to change teachers, you know, for each class.

me: OK Do you remember any humorous things that happened

mrt: Ah, not right off hand it's a lot of things we did I wouldn't want to admit too (ha ha) ah (Toll him about when you used to play basketball his wife remarked.)

me: I'm on the basketball team

mrt: are you

me: Yeah

mrt: Why I played I got my letter in basketball and I ah, played in high school. Back then we didn't have, ah I got my letter in 9th grade because kids who weren't interested in basketball and there wasn't enough kids to have a full team



You know for the whole high school we didn't ah, we had a seventh and eight grade team rather than a junior varsity. It's there just wasn't enough kids.

me: Do you remember any of your grade school teachers.

mrt: Oh yeah, some of them are still living. Oh yeah I know them well. Mrs Gleason is still fairly active yet.

me: Do you remember anything funny that happened to them.

mrt: The teachers  
me: yes

mrt: Oh yeah I can remember a couple of them that were, oh well I don't really remember too much that was probably funny at least not at hand in the lower grades but in the high school we had one teacher that ah once he got talking he became engrossed in everything he was talking about. Put his chair about halfway, and we tied the leg of the desk to the chair and of course he spent quite a lot of time trying to pull the chair out without realizing what was holding it. We were all laughing cause we knew what was going on. But we never, I think things were basically, ah we didn't pull very many things on the teacher then, ah my personal recognition of them days was a little more stricter than they probably are today.

me: OK, How did you get to school

mrt: Most of the time I walked. I lived about a mile away from the school and right from kindergarten all way up to about 5th or 6th grade I walked every day. Most of the time I would walk back to home for lunch and go back to school.



Then they started having a bus run which I didn't ride too long because they didn't have it, and once you got into the seventh grade you had to walk anyway. I never rode the bus much, it wasn't too far, only about a mile. (4)

me: Do you have any favorite subjects

mrT: Favorite subjects, I guess mathematics and a, history as we travel. It's still one of the things I like to look at.

me: What was your worst subject

mrT: My worst subject, probably English

me: That's mine too

mrT: Writing and all, could never, for some reason, could never get a handle on all the nouns and pronouns and adjectives and all that kind of stuff.

me: Where you in any, any extracurricular activities.

mrT: ah, just basketball, that was about the only extracurricular thing at school, just basketball, just boys basketball, any other sports, you simply played on your own. There was nothing the school ever did back then because they didn't have the money for it. I guess you couldn't call it extracurricular, National Mine always used to have twice a year, a program as part, you never thought of it that way and you ended up being part of a music class or part of an operetta, which I don't think they do that any more today.

me: Did you win any trophies

mrT: myself

me: The whole team, or yourself

mrT: nope, no, by the time I got in, National Mine was a good basketball team. And I guess by the time I started



That's what happened, with the schools power and after a certain length of time someone else takes over that thing, I was on the unlucky side about being in basketball about that, I shouldn't say that, when I was in the 9th grade in '52 that was probably one of the better years and that was the last good year. While I was there.

me: How about championships. Did you win any of those.

mrT: Um, well that's you no probably around '52 or '53 that was my 9th grade year, as I remember right, I think we won the district championship. Back then there was a lot more competition than now, a lot more small schools. Lots of the small schools have gone the way, the way national mine did.

me: What were the punishments, you know, back then.

mrT: Well you mean for why

me: Being Bad

mrT: Probably homework, you know, I guess that was the one thing you got, I didn't see much staying after school you get extra homework. I guess the other thing is, you see a lot of wacking with a ruler I don't think you see so much of that any more today. It's a little bit different, as far as you know sports you, you couldn't smoke. You get caught smoking and you were gone. I don't know for how long but I'd have to say during the time I was there, we didn't really have any instructions, the kids wanted to play and the rules where rules, the kids I was with wanted to play we never had a problem.



There was you know a few little things that happened in class, someone would haul a snake into school and there would be a lot of screaming going on. And you might get thrown out of class for a day or two, if there was uh no really nasty things that happened. Well, lets put it this way there really weren't afraid of the teachers. But the last thing I really wanted to do was to go home and say dad I got a crack in the ear and he'd probably give me more before he asked what for. I think it was a little different back then the way it was now. I think the parents didn't want there kids goofing up and you just didn't get in a lot of trouble

me: How did you dress in school

mrt: Most of my way through school, you dressed in jeans, you know flanel shirts or whatever. Most of the girls wore skirts, or dresses or blouses. But they were good. I see sometimes, I've been around some schools. I don't really approve of that either of kids having holes in there knags. I don't ah, when you went to school you were clean. You may have had jeans on but they were clean. and ah, a little later on, they were starting to assist on a little better clothes than jeans but I don't know that it ever ah, when my kids went through school they never where ah, that bad, as far as I could remember there really weren't any dress codes as long as they were clean they didn't care. And they looked decent. I never saw anyone come to school who looked ragged.

me: what was lunchtime, like

mrt: when I was in school lunchtime used to be, an hour. First of all, a lot of us walked home, you walked home, ate and went,



back to school again. Once I got older, and more into sports ⑦  
The noon was a time where you hurry up and eat and go  
outside and play football. Someone would bring a football to school  
and we'd play football. Winter time was basketball. Spring time  
it was baseball. You use that hour as much as you could  
for playing instead of eating.

me: What was hot lunch like.

me: good. I'd have to look back now and I shake my head,  
when I'm on my way to work when I hear the hot lunch  
program. Given over the air. I think we had some of the  
best cooks that ever could have been hired. We had meals, as  
far as hot lunches where concerned we probably. I hate to  
say this we had better meals than probably a lot of people had  
for their main meal in the evening time. Maybe the kids were  
a lot more active back then. You probably wore a lot  
of it off before you went back in those anyways. I can  
never say that there was a bad hot lunch in a national  
mine. They were cooked right there, hot good meals.

me: We only have a half hour to eat and go outside

me: when you're in a bigger school like you are right  
now I guess it's pretty hard to have facilities to keep  
kids busy. when we go out at noon time we played  
softball. The whole game was made up of virtually every kid  
there was there. I really feel we get from a small school  
some excellent teachers as good as an education that you  
could ask for and we got all the basics down. There wasn't  
a lot of subjects that you could choose from.

me: Did you participate in any plays or programs.



mrT: yes, every year. You didn't have a choice.

From the time you were in kindergarten you took you a while, to learn in your music classes, to learn a new song, or two new songs. and it ended up that's what you did in the Christmas program. Every body in the school participated. I don't, if once you got into high school you might not have a music class but you where expected to perform in chorus or provide back ground music for whatever was going on. It got to the point where, I think the National mine stadium used to sit, oh well over 3 hundred people and it used to get to the point where you had to get a ticket to get in, and the only way to get into the plays was by getting tickets through the kids. They were so good that people where coming from all over that didn't even have kids in school. But the quality of the plays were just Fantastic and It got kids out in front of people performing and it took a little bit of the shyness out of you. and It helps kids get jobs. It helped you along. at times I wondered why do we have to do this

me: yeah

mrT: Well it was very enjoyable, I look back now and it was very enjoyable

me: Did you have any picnics.

mrT: NO, there was none. You're referring to the school right

me: yeah

mrT: yeah ah, no, the only thing lucky that you did was you mi



have a field day which in a biology class you might go out when its nice. The other thing you could do as a senior was skip day. You actually went on a trip someplace to do something. I don't think they have that anymore.

me: Who was your principle.

mrT: The principle was George Onnala. I think I disliked going to school until I realized he was probably one of the best teachers I had in my life. He was a perfectionist. He was very strict and he expected things out of you and he demanded things out of you. I really didn't like to go to his classes. When you grow up I think he was probably the best teacher I even had.

me: Can you describe your graduation ceremony, like

mrT: I think its the same as they have now. You know they have the presentation of the diplomas and the valedictorians. It lasted a couple hours. Oh, there was only sixteen of us. The classes weren't very big. My kids graduated with kids they didn't even know, yet, I knew everyone from a senior, possibly right down to the sixth grade. It was a lot closer of an environment, where kids got along better than a big school, which I think is one of the things I miss.

me: Do you have any special memories of graduation,

mrT: I guess all I can say is, I can't wait to get out just can't wait for that day. I guess I didn't realize this but that I won't see many of my friends anymore



and you spent the last 13 years with these kids and that your not going to be with them anymore it didn't hit home that there would be this much of a change

me: Did you keep in contact with any of your friends

mrt: Ah, not too many, at that time. Now out of a class of 16, of course 2 have died, I would say at least half a dozen in the general area the others are here from Colorado to Washington. In Utah and the Green Bay area. We as a class, the last get together was the fifty year all class reunion which turned out good, and I tried to make a 30 year class reunion 3 or 4 years ago. Its pretty hard. Some of it surprising. Some of the classes stayed together while others spread apart. Some stayed while some other classes have gone

me: Do you have any fondest memories of the school

mrt: I guess the things I really liked about the school is the opereta that Mrs. Gleason put on. Of course I still enjoy basket ball. I watch it all the time. as far as one memory was one basket ball game when you've done that special thing in your mind that you do. Its a combination of things. I really enjoyed school. I practically never missed a day in which I received many certificates in which I don't know where they are, I don't keep that stuff.



national mine used to give out half year and whole year certificates for attendance. I had a lot of them. I had to be sick, and I mean sick before I didn't go to school. Probably not because of the classes but because I like to be with the kids. It's a small school and more like family. (11)

me: what's the biggest change in schools today.

mrT: The biggest change

me: yeah

mrT: The biggest change, well, ah, I guess the biggest change is the variety of subjects. Sometimes I really believe that it lost something in the basics. Now for instance Geography isn't any longer a required subject. At least in high school. I don't know if you supposed to know everything before going to high school, that you should have learned it all. For instance on the news, I see kids in Texas don't know where Mexico is. To me there's something wrong there. I have a pretty good idea of where things are located from reading the newspaper and watching the news. Most of it from school. It's a big world, you can never learn enough about the world and people.

me: Do you have anything else to add.

mrT: I guess I'll just go back and repeat. I really feel that the small school had a place and economically there not possibly anymore. But I really liked it, and I feel badly that they've gone that way. The bigger schools offer a few more things, but they lost some of the opportunities that the small school had. In a large school there's a lot of people that get lost and they don't feel they belong anywhere. I think the small school gives you that feeling that you belong there.

me: OK, I guess that's it.