

Me: My name is Kirsten Nelson. I'm interviewing Sylvia Carlson at her house.  
Today's date is January 21, 1997. The focus of the interview is Sylvia Carlson's attendance at North Lake School. Give me your full name.

Gram: Sylvia Carlson.

Gramp: Sylvia Marie Carlson.

Me: When is your birthday plus the year?

Gram: February 6, 1911.

Me: Where were you born?

Gram: In Ishpeming.

Me: How many brothers and sisters do have?

Gram: I just had one sister.

Me: Okay. What is her name?

Gram: <sup>Aune</sup> Aune (sp?) Bjorne

Me: How do you spell that, because I'm going to spell that?

Gram: A-U-N-E - Aune Bjorne B-J-O-R-N

Me: Oh, I'm gonna have to ask you, too. (referring to Gramps)  
Which sibling - well, which sibling did you get along with best? (laughing)

Gramps: laughing

Gram: She's the only sibling I had.

Me: Did you get along with her?

Gram: Oh yes. Oh we had our little arguments

Me: Were you constant about going to school or did you have to stay home to help around the house?

Gram: No. I went everyday.

Me: Which teacher did you like best?

Gram: Oh. I had a lot of nice teachers. Miss Lindons. I had 2 Miss Lindons. They were nice.

Me: And what grade teachers were they?

Gram: Oh. I'd say one was third grade and the other was sixth.

Me: Why did you like them?

Gram: Because they were kind and good and (kind to others?)

Me: Which grade was your favorite?

Gram: Fourth

Me: What schools did you go to?

Gram: North Lake and then I went to high school.

Me: Ishpeming?

Gram: Four years in Ishpeming.

Me: Which school was your favorite?

Gram: Oh I liked them all. I went to Ferris for a while and liked that too.

Me: Were you in any curriculums or they didn't have any curriculums?

Gram: Well, we had to take the bus that came, you know, there was a bus for high school. And you couldn't stay too late. But I did go for singing and that at times.

Me: You didn't have any sports? There wasn't any sports?

Gram: Oh yes. We had gym. We had gym.

Me: Oh you had gym? You were in gym?

Gram: Mhm, nmm.

Me: Oh I didn't know you had gym class.

Gram: We all had to go in gym. That's where we swam and we played volleyball and

Me: Okay. Um...

Gram: You don't know where to go, hey?

Me: Um.. ok. How about your special memories of school, what special memories do you have?

Gram: Oh, I have a lot of good memories, but - I met a lot of kids and different kids in Ishpeming. And -

Me: Who was your best friend or friends?

Gram: I had a friend here, Mottie Beruski. She is now.

Me: You're going to have to spell that for me! Do you know who to spell that? Just the last name.

Gram: Capital D-E then capital R-O-C-H-E.

Me: Okay. What were the classes like? Do you know how many kids there was? How big the classroom was and how long school was?

Gram: It must have started a little before 9. and then we went until noon and then back again and left at 3:30. And we had to be there to catch the bus or otherwise we'd walk. And I walked several times.

Me: So you got to ride the bus?

Gram: Ummm. Hmm. It wasn't bus - well it was. It was a bus for school.

Me: What were the teachers like?

Gram: They were good. As usual, ~~there~~ there were some that weren't - that I didn't like so much but most of them are good.

Me: What was your favorite subject?

Gram: Literature.

Me: And why?

Gram: Oh I've always liked that, Reading and...

Me: In what grade did you start doing homework?

Gram: Oh, in high school. We didn't do much in the grade school level.

Me: What was your homework like and did you like to do it?

Gram: Not math. I didn't like that. I had a  $\left( \frac{?}{?} \right)$

Me: Did you have to copy problems out of a book, you know?

Gram: Yes, yes.

Me: What did you write on?

Gram: Write on?

Me: Write on. Like just paper or did you use slates or something?

Gram: Oh, it wasn't. well we had, the teacher would put a problem on the blackboard but we wrote on nice paper.

Me: What did you write with. Did you have inkwells and all that?

Gram: Yeah there were inkwells and a pencil.

Me: What was lunch like?

Gram: Well, we brought our own lunch. We didn't have, oh, what do you call it?

Me: Hot lunch.

Gram: Hot lunch.

Me: What did you have for lunch? What did you eat?

Gram: Oh, my mother would make peanut butter sandwiches or something. Pickle and ham (laughing) and...

Me: Describe recess and in high school did you get to leave the school to go and have recess, I mean go to eat.

Gram: No, we didn't go out to eat. But I usually went up to the line early. That was noon hour, you didn't have recess during the school.

Me: How long was recess, ~~then~~ lunch hour, just that...

Gram: I think it must have been about an hour.

Me: Okay. What did you play during recess when you were a kid? You know, what games did you play?

Gram: Oh, jump rope. Played marbles. Just chat. (It would be silly or And be silly?)

Me: Did you take field trips?

Gram: Yes. We went.

Me: Where?

Gram: Well, I can't just just a family lumber. But we went to a lumber just out in the woods and looked at mother nature.

Me: What were your desks like?

Gram: I think they're similar, of course, they're nicer now, but they were littler.

Me: Where were your jackets kept?

Gram: Well we had a closet just of the room, you know and we kept...

Me: cloakroom?

Gram: Cloakroom.

Me: Do you have any cloakroom stories?

Gram: In high school, I remember a friend of mine and I we both got blood noses or bleed noses. We were in there trying to get (cheered?) up. (laughing)

me: How'd you get them?

Gram: Well some kids do have them. I remember the girl's name. And I haven't seen her so much. I had to go to the doctor because sometimes it wouldn't stop.

Me: Describe your clothing: winter and summer. Did you always have to wear dresses?

Gram: Yes, because they didn't wear pants. There were no pants. And I don't think, I think I had 2 or 3 dresses.

Me: Only 2 or 3? That's all you -

Gram: We didn't have. Sometimes my mother had to make them and I didn't like them because (she did?) but she made nice, nice dresses.

Me: Did you wear layers like during winter?

Gram: Oh, I wore homemade stockings my mother made. ~~black~~ black! Oh! I hated them. And then sometimes we had to wear long johns under there because there was no pants. Bloomers we used to call them. (laughing) — all out. But I better not tell you.

Me: (laughing) How did you get to school. You walked to North Lake. But -

Gram: I walked, I just

Me: in high school you took the bus and -

Gram: Oh yeah.

Me: how long? What was the bus ride like and how long was it?

Gram: It's about 4 miles.

Me: Then how long did it take?

Gram: Gee! I don't know. An hour? ~~all~~ Because we'd have to pick kids up along the way and -

Me: Describe any memorable holiday celebrations at school.

Gram: Well we used to have Washington's Day off, you know. We had Abraham Lincoln's Day off. We had lots of time off. And we always had a good time.

Me: So you didn't give gifts to each other?

Gram: No

Me: Money?

Gram: If you did, it was something we had hand-made, you know.

Me: Describe any special programs.

Gram: Programs for what?

Me: For, you know, didn't you have Christmas programs?

Gram: Oh yes! Yes. I always had to be - because I was tall, they always gave me the mother's part. But then we had choruses and that too.

Me: Were you a model student and receive average, above or below grades?

Gram: Well, they were good grades. I don't know that I was the smartest one there.

Me: Well, if you got to go to college you must have been pretty smart.

Gram: Hmm...?

Me: In grades 6 thru 12 did you switch classes?

Gram: Grades 6-12. Oh - in high school.

Me: In high school.

Gram: Oh yes. Then you had to go - how long was it? Forty-five minutes at each class or sometimes you'd have two - double class. Like sewing was always so long and -

Me: How many teachers did you have a day because you switched classes.

Gram: Oh, 3, 4, mostly I had 5 subjects besides gym and singing. So it was a long day.

?: What sports did ~~you~~ boys and/or girls participate in?

Gram: You mean both of them?

Me: Yeah, or what did boys play and what girls play?

Gram: We didn't, you know, the girls were.

Me: But in gym you got to play volleyball and swim and all that?

Gram: Oh yeah. But I knew how to swim so I didn't have any trouble with that. A lot of my friends didn't know how to swim and they didn't learn how either! (Laughing) They were afraid of the water!

Me: Was there a kindergarten or preschool? Did you go to preschool?

Gram: No, there wasn't anything like that. Kindergarten I went when I was 3.

Me: What the name of your first teacher?

Gram: Miss Clifton.

Me: Describe a typical day as an elementary student

Gram: I wasn't always on the pocky side. But I got there in time! (Laughing) And it was nice to go to school. See your friends again. There was some days when it got a little harder. You had to study a little more.

Me: How about as a high school student?

Gram: I liked it. I liked it...

Me: What did you major in, in high school?

Gram: Ah, it was called commercial business. I took everything: typing, shorthand-

Me: Oh, so you weren't like "Sugy Remember"? You didn't take home economics?

Gram: Well I took-

Me: Well you took it but didn't major in it?

Gram: I took sewing-

Me: Well good, that's a change.

Gram: But that wasn't. But that's what I took. [7]

Gram: (cont) So nearly all the students that were in commercial, I would be with them.

Me: Did you finish high school?

Gram: Oh yes.

Me: What year did you graduate?

Gram: 1929.

Me: And did you go to college?

Gram: Yes.

Me: How many years did you go?

Gram: I didn't go too long. I didn't go too long. That's when the Depression hit. There was no money and anyway, I knew just as much as those others that go through it. (laughing) I found out we had a very good school. One of the best.

Me: How many students were in the graduating class of your high school?

Gram: 145. We had a very big class.

Me: Do you know how many dropped out?

Gram: Being a sophomore, oh, there was a lot that dropped out.

Me: To get married, go to the mine, or what?

Gram: Yeah. People didn't think so much of it, did they think that was for smart a-hecks, or what.

Me: What courses did you take?

Gram: I followed business, but I knew it so well, that I didn't have any trouble.

Me: And other courses like Home Ec, and stuff.

Gram: Oh, I didn't take anything. They were all like shorthand and typing, and typing and I'd go to the teachers, even take typing from them, you know. For them. I'd have to do it for them.

Me: Do you have any yearbooks? or class pictures?

Gram: Oh I've got a lot of yearbooks.

Me: Oh good. That will be cool. I have to see 18



them. What kind of lab facilities did you have?

Gram: We had good ones in Ishpeming, but naturally we didn't have any in elementary.

Me: Did you have biology and dissect stuff and that?

Gram: Yes, I had biology, geometry, and trigonometry. Not trigonometry, three of those. Algebra was another one.

Me: What was the men to women teacher ratio? In high school did you have all women teachers too?

Gram: Yes. In fact I'm trying to think. There were hardly any men teachers. They were all women.

Me: Were they allowed to get married?

Gram: No. No. They kept that quiet if they could.

Me: How did students get into trouble or how were rules broken?

Gram: Well when I was in college, you had to be in, there was a curfew, imagine when you're that age. I was 18. No, they checked on you. But we went, Myrtle, that's the girl I went with, she had an aunt down there, so we went there every weekend. But we always had to have an excuse. Of course, we could think of good excuses! (laugh)

Me: How were unruly children handled? Grade school and that?

Gram: How were they?

Me: Handled. Like if they got caught in trouble. Just like talking in school and pulling pranks or anything. Did they have to go to the principals?

Gram: No. I didn't have to anyway so I don't know.

Me: So you were never in trouble or anything?

Gram: No, nothing.

Me: Did your family work or rest on Sunday? You know, did they go to church and all that?

Gram: Not that often.

Me: Do you remember what church you went to? Well when you went there.

Gram: Bethel Lutheran,

Me: Bethel Lutheran? Ok. Do you remember any 19

sickness or broken bones?

Gram: Oh yes. I broke my hand and my elbow when I was tiny.

Me: Doing what?

Gram: You know, I was jumping over the fence. You remember those fences and those clickers you shot them.

Gramps: ~~Yes~~ On the gates, you mean?

Gram: Yeah. That thing was swinging and then I fell. We were playing "Follow the Leader" with the neighborhood girls. It was a bad break and they never 2 2 (? said it mended?)

Me: Did you ever have or know someone with whooping cough, polio, scarlet fever, measles, mumps?

Gram: My <sup>girls,</sup> they had whooping cough and measles

Me: Were there any minorities or immigrants in your classes or non-English speaking ones?

Gram: Recent immigrants? Well, no not really because they didn't go to school. But my father and mother came from Finland and that's the way it was with all the kids. None of us could talk English when we went to school. Most of us couldn't. It took us 2 or 3 years to be able to talk.

Gramps: It was common.

Gram: Very common. ~~speaks~~ ~~do~~ ~~do~~

Me: Ok. What were your parents' names?

Gram: Mary and Jalmer

Me: Jalmer? Your last name?

Gram: Laine. Laine L-A-I-N-E.

Me: Wow. They're cool names, though. I like them.

Oh yeah, what are your parents' names? I'll put them on this tape, though. (Referring to Gramps) your parents' name.

Gram: Your mothers' and fathers.

Me: Your mom and dad's.

Gram: Nicholai.

Gramps: Well, I grew up with a step father, Jaal Sawl. I had my mother's name, was Eileen Perkala, maiden name.

Me: Okay, so I have that for you too. How big were the school or schools. Both of them. North Lake and Ishpeming, comparing sizes.

Gram: Oh, we had a big school. You couldn't really call it a country school. It was a, you know. Some of them had only 1 or 2 in a class. Yes, I've been to school where they only have a few students. We had big classes here.

Me: Do you remember any family trips?  
Gram: Oh yes, my mother and dad had a car I think and we had to go with them. Not in the winter time because they didn't keep the roads up. But in the summer time.

Me: Where did you go?

Gram: Chantham.

Gramps: You went to the Soo a lot.

Gram: ~~Soo~~ Sault St Marie, because I had a cousin there, ? ? ? And we went to Copper Country, so that, ~~Arnie~~ and I got along, as others didn't.

Me: How did the flu epidemic of 1918 affect you or family or people around you?

Gram: Oh, it was horrid. We didn't get it in our family. But, I...

Me: people around North Lake?

Gram: Oh the kids in North Lake would get it. In my class there was 3 boys, just neighbors they all died. It was horrid.

Me: What was the snowstorm of '38 like? How high was the snow and all that?

Gram: We were married, yes, we were married already.  
We were married al- that's not on is it?

Me: Yup! What? It doesn't matter.

Gram: That's all right, yeah.

Me: Don't care what you said.

Gramps: May the 16<sup>th</sup> 1931 we were married.

Gram: Yeah, I know that. But I was just thinking about that storm. I'll show you.

Me: You don't have to get them now. You can get them later. We can just finish this now.

Gram: Oh, okay.

Me: I don't have to step, so you'll be like I forget where we were and... do you know how much snow fell?

Gram: Oh, I don't ever measure anything (laugh)

Me: How high was it? Was it over the power wires?

Gram: It was over the, they were over almost to the top of the telephone poles.

Me: How many days of school did your children miss because of it?

Gram: I just ~~thought~~ said 2 (laugh)

Me: I have to keep asking these. (laugh) How did the Italian Hall Fire of 1913 affect you? Did you have any friends?

Gram: No, no. That's very far from here. I think it's 100 miles from here. We didn't. That's in Houghton. Oh, no, Calumet. What's that Calumet.

Me: Okay, I didn't know

Gramps: What about?

Gram: The Italian Fire. I said that, people couldn't go <sup>there</sup> long distances because there were very few cars. The roads were bad. It's in our older age...

Gramps: We were too young to have that...

Gram: Yeah, we were too young.

Gramps: Matter of fact, you weren't born yet. Oh, you were about a year old. You were born in '11 and that was 1912.

Me: How did the Barnes-Hecker disaster affect you?

Gram: Naw, that a lot closer. My dad, how would you say it, worked next door in the Morris Mine. And a lot of my friends' fathers died there. I was a sophomore in high school. Yes and there was 2 or 3 close friends whose fathers died. And I knew a lot of them.

Me: How did the strike of 1946 affect you?

Gram: (laugh) I helped dad to run it!

Gramps: (laugh)

Me: Did you have like picket lines? Is that when the union started?

Gram: Yes, in town. They had picket lines in town.

Me: And that's when the union started?

Gram: Yes. They came to our house, and dad was at the, you can't say on the head of it, but that's what he did. They came to our house. So I met a lot of them.

Me: How did you feel about WWII?

Gram: Well, I was grown up a little bit <sup>then</sup> already. But, it was sad. Temply sad.

Me: Do you remember where you first heard it or whatever? When you first learned about it?

Gram: Oh, I can't remember. Because I was very young I think I was 10 or so. It ended in 1918.

Me: No, WWII.

Gram: Well, that is, no that's.

Me: No. WWII is like, I think it's 40's or 50's.

Gram: 40's.

Me: I'm not quite sure. I'm not even sure what WWII was about.

Gram: Oh, that was terrible, too. That was terrible.

Me: How did the Depression affect you?

Gram: Well, we just got married and the next week he was out of a job and we didn't have enough to eat!

Me: Did you have rations + how did they work? 113

Gram: Well they gave a little, they weren't books, or were they? Because sugar was hard to get.

Gramps: 2? 2? 2? meat, sugar. (2? 2? = During the war, you mean?)

Gram: meat, sugar

Gramps: Tires, gasoline, everything was rationed.

Gram: gasoline, someone always changed it! (laugh)

Gramps: It would of worked according to the size of your family.

Gram: It was hard on some people. In the cities it was terrible. A lot of them died from starvation. That's what they did.

Gramps: Everything was rationed: meat, sugar, gas, tires. Everything was rationed.

Gram: What was that? Well, you always hear about the Great Depression, that's what it is. First time there was in here. In this country.

Me: Was there fall out shelters or air drills?

Gram: 2. Because that was before then. They didn't have those.

Me: What did you do on Halloween?

Gram: Oh. I don't do much. But I joined in.

Me: Was there trick-or-treating or did you just play pranks, you know? Did you go trick-or-treating, and costumes and all that?

Gram: Well, I really didn't go that much. But then we'd have a party or something, you know. Hard time party. You'd go in sheets or something.

Me: What did you do on a date?

Gram: What did I do on a day?

Me: On a day; I mean a date.

Gram: Oh, a date. We went show, I remember that. I'd go to the basketball, or there was a movie at the clubhouse. Then, I'd always see him! (laugh)

Me: How about candy? What was the price for candy?

Gram: Well, they used to 2 here in the store. Yeah, that was a real big store. And he'd have a case of all penny candy, and the kids would go there, "Gimme a pennies' worth of this" (laugh) Your grandma Dana was

there a lot!

Gramps: A bottle of pop was a nickel, and a chocolate bar was a nickel.

Gram: They had everything, everything in there. And some of it was a 100 years old! (laugh) But it was nice to have a store right here. You didn't run to town for every little thing like you do now! (laugh)

Me: How old were you when you 1st started driving? Did you ever start driving?

Gram: No, I tried it, but I didn't.

Me: You never learned, oh, you learned, but... What did you do for entertainment?

Gram: See, I don't know. We just went outside and walked the streets. Because we weren't allowed to go out unless there was a movie or something they were once a week, huh?

Gramps: What?

Gram: The movies.

Gramps: Yeah.

Me: Could your family afford a radio?

Gram: Yes, but we didn't have one for a long, long time. Grampa. Grandpa Liney. He used to come over here to watch or tv and grandma didn't believe in that nonsense! (laugh) And it kind of was an awful thing to spend all that money. You know, like aunt and uncle would come here, my mother and dad would come here, and they'd be sitting around on the floor. But that wasn't worth watching.

Me: When did you 1st watch tv and what programs?

Gramps: We had our 1st in 1950.

Gram: our 1st one. But your mother had one.

Gramps: No, they never had a tv.

Gram: But I when I was in college, I went with a nice, young man to the show and that's when they had, I always remember when they had the first talking picture 15

shaw. It was ~~the~~ Gee! People made so much of it. The name of the show was ("Croquet"?)

Me: What programs did you watch on tv?

Gram: Well, that's what I tried to tell you a little while ago, you know.. Words on the bottom. You had to read it fast, so you had an idea what it was about! (laugh)

Me: What were your favorite programs?

Gram: Well, I don't know. They were all pretty good.

Me: What kind of picture did you get on the tv?

Gram: Well this was the radio, so you didn't get a picture.

Me: Oh, but on tv, what kinda of picture did you get?

Gram: Oh, that was snowy and white, and they'd watch it so intently and you didn't get 1/2 of it. (laugh)

Gramps: Lots of snow (laugh)

Gram: Lots of snow! (laugh)

Gramps: We used to call it snow.

Me: So, how has it improved? Just sound, picture, whatever.

Gram: Oh, you know. Of course, you didn't see the tube you're comparing it with! (laugh) But my mother didn't get a tv until my dad died. And, you know, I just got it, I knew she had the money so, and she got so excited with those.. soaps! (laugh) She knew all the people on there, then. And dad came over here. He said, "Now who's the bad guys and who's the good guys?" (laugh) Oh gee!

Me: So did your family watch tv or listen to the radio more?

Gram: My dad always listened to the radio.

Me: (yawn)

Gram: You're getting tired, there.  $\approx \approx$  (So long)

Me: Oh well. About the North Lake fire. What year did it burn and do you know the date and all that?

Gram: Oh, no, I don't,...

Gramps: What?

Me: The date of the fire.

Gram: I know Dona was in the 2nd grade ~~the~~ T16



Me: Was she in 2nd grade?

Gramps: Dona was... Beverly was in kindergarten, Dona I think was in 3rd grade.

Gram: 2nd grade, I thought.

Gramps: Second was it?

Gram: I don't remember!

Me: She said first, you said 2nd, and he said third.

Gram: I don't think...

Gramps: I know Beverly was in kindergarten.

Gram: Was she?

Gramps: Yeah.

Gram: I wasn't concerned about her. I was concerned about Dona! That's what I thought..

Me: (laugh) That's so nice!

Gramps: That was pretty exciting.

Gram: That was exciting. Then, when I heard that Dona, she had a bib. I had forgotten to take her bib off... (laugh)

Me: And she stuck it in her boots and she was so glad that nobody ever knew she wore a bib! Oh, I know, she was telling me about all those stories, oh...

Gramps: When Dona was 7 years old, (and or in that)

Me: Was everyone accounted for?

Gram: Oh yes, yes, and ~~no~~ nobody got burned or anything. I'll show you those pictures.

Me: Do you know who saw the fire?

Gram: Well, there were all the people. You see, I had Beverly at home. I wouldn't leave her. If she wasn't there, ~~she~~ I would have been running up there myself.

Me: So do you know when the girls went back after the fire. You know they stayed at the clubhouse. Do you know when they went back to school?

Gram: Oh, gee. They did go back shortly, it didn't take long. They had those sheets dividing that big ha- have you ever been up there?

Me: No, but she was telling me about it.

Gram: It's a dance hall. We had weddings and parties up there, everything was there.

Me: Marcia's reception was there.

Gram: It was in the recreation hall upstairs, they had the school.

Gram: Yeah, but they had blankets and sheets, so that would divide them a little bit. (-???)

Me: Do you have any special memories of pets past or present?

Gram: No. Well, I remember when I was a little girl, we had 2 cats, big, mean, alley cats, but I liked them! (laugh)

Me: How about like when you had Dona and all them. Did you ever have -

Gram: Oh yeah, we always had a dog.

Me: She told me Sing was her favorite.

Gram: Yeah, she was a nice dog.

Me: What do you do in your spare time?

Gram: Now?

Me: Yeah, now.

Gram: See I don't do anything! (laugh) I try to do a little bit! You mean socially or at home?

Me: Wherever and your hobbies, and all that.

Gram: I have friends, we get together quite a bit, go to parties and go to my grandchildren's if I remember them! (laugh)

Me: Do you know of anyone else we should interview?

Gram: I really don't know because a lot of them have been interviewed. They used to put them in the newspaper, get a picture of them, like Tyler Par ~~kinson~~.

Me: Did we interview her? I don't remember... 118

But we interviewed some Lyne, I don't know who, but I'll check...

Gram: Oh, I bet it was her. And Bert and Josie LaFreniere were interviewed and Myrtle and Pete were interviewed.

Me: Anything else we should know about North Lake?

Gram: Do you know Gardener Wahlberg?

Me: Somebody... who interviewed.

Gram: He wrote, his father bought Gigi's house, that, next to Parvinen's, that's where Wahlbergs lived.

Me: Yeah, I have, I know, because I heard of name...

Gram: But anyway Gardener, I think he was the baby in the family, his father kept a diary everyday. And he wrote an article on it, and I don't know if Sharon gave it to me or who, I got it, you know. That is very good to get a...

Me: Anything else?

Gram: I don't know.

Gramps: (that thing throw a lot of heat at you?)

Me: What? There was a sand and...

Gramps: That furnace kicks in and the registers there.

Me: Anything else?

Gramps: That's it.

Gram: I think that's everything.

Gramps: Lots of questions!