

INTERVIEW WITH SARAH BOTTRELL
MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN
NOVEMBER 15, 2005

SUBJECT:

MAGNAGHI, RUSSELL M. (RMM): Interview with Sarah Bottrell. Marquette, Michigan. November 15, 2005. First of all, I have to ask you your birthday.

SARAH BOTTRELL (SB): 10/22/04.

RMM: 1904.

SB: Yeah.

RMM: Could you talk a little about your background? You grew up in Ishpeming. Could you talk a little about growing up in Ishpeming?

SB: I was born there, and went through high school in Ishpeming.

RMM: What did your father do?

SB: He was a miner. He had been in Europe. He was a fisherman on the Atlantic. That's strange, you know – he came to a new world. How could he stand it, from being out in the ocean? You do what the economics is around you, hey?

RMM: Where was he from in Europe?

SB: Cornwall, England.

RMM: And what town?

SB: Closest that you would know about would be Penzance (?). That's four miles from the ocean. They were from, it was a fishing village called Redruth.

RMM: So your dad came over then, as a fisherman. Why did he leave the old country?

SB: I think the relatives had died. My mother had one brother who came to Lake Linden. I don't know whether that attracted them. In fact, when they came, they went to Lake Linden first. They didn't like it there at all. He came down to Ishpeming and just on the lark, you might say. With no job. They had twin boys, two and a half years old. But they made it, though.

RMM: So he got into mining, went from fishing to mining.

SB: Yeah, it doesn't make any sense.

RMM: But it was just a job.

SB: It's food for the family. That's all you can call it, you know.

RMM: Speaking of food, were there any special foods that you ate at home.

SB: We ate very simply. Maybe that's why I lasted so long! No –

RMM: But did you have pasties, or saffrons?

SB: Oh, sure. Saffron cake and pasties. In fact, you'll have to smile – I don't know whether I dare get rid of one little mouthful for you. The other day there was a little box in the mailbox, and I thought, "Well, this is strange. I didn't send for anything." And it was a saffron cake from my friend in Penzance. Shipped it from kind of a famous baker over there, from a town called St. Just. Werner's Bakery. We get something like it here, but it isn't, you know. Here, they make it so rich, it's really like cake, and full of kerns (?). To open it, and see it, I've never had that before in my life. But there's my birthday present.

RMM: All the way from Cornwall.

SB: It came four thousand miles. When you think of it, it was nice, you know?

RMM: What was it like growing up, back in the early twentieth century, up in Ishpeming, for you as a child.

SB: Outside of the fact that the miners got two and a half dollars a day for ten months, and that's what you lived on. But I must've had it easy, because I never went without nice clothes or food all the time. I just don't have any memory. I must've had a good mother to do all those things for us.

RMM: Did your mother keep a garden, and chickens, or anything?

SB: No, we didn't do anything like that. We lived right in the middle of town. I was surprised at reading some of those statistics. The population of Ishpeming was 10,000. I grew up in a city!

RMM: Actually, at that time, Ishpeming was larger than Marquette.

SB: Sure. At that time there were about 92 different mines in the general area – Gwinn, Palmer, so forth. So I really knew city life, you know. I didn't know agricultural life at all.

RMM: How did your father take to mining? Did he ever complain about it?

SB: He thought it was hard work. He became sort of a dynamite specialist, you might say, which is pretty important there. Some years ago, - you know how you go out on West Bluff and you know how those houses are on rock? They were evidently doing some building there, at that time. They asked my father if he would do some of the dynamiting. He didn't, though, he refused it. But he was clever at it.

RMM: So that was his occupation in the mine, was dynamite blasting. [Sound of chiming]

SB: They worked in partners, and they had morning, afternoon, and night shifts, which they had to keep alternating. This is my clock that you hear, that I got for my birthday, last year, at the party. Anyway, this particular day, my father was afternoon shift. So he put in his time, and came home. His partner was a Swedish man called Mr. Carlson. He went into the same raise for night shift – it caved in and killed him.

RMM: And your father was supposed to be on that shift.

SB: That's what I'm saying. Who knows, huh? I would've been a little girl in poverty, let me tell you, because there was one man who was a "poor commissioner," they called him. I guess he was elected. He was a toughie. I know our neighbor's husband died, too. She had three children. He allotted her ten dollars a month to live on. So I was lucky. I had my father, who always worked. I have to tell you, this family joke on them. They would get some of the dust of the iron ore in their ears. This one day he must've had it, and he got sort of deaf, and at home we had to be hollering so he could hear. This one morning, my mother and he were at breakfast before he left for work, and my mother said, [very low whisper] "Why are you going to work this morning, Daniel?" He said, "What makes you think I'm not going to work? Don't I always go to work?" She whispered it to him and he heard it! [laughter] That was a joke for years. So she says, "Are you going to work, this morning?" "What makes you think. . .!" He was quite insulted!

RMM: When you were growing up, did you have pasties on any special day of the week?

SB: No, just every now and then. There's one thing that we always had. For one thing, we had coffee once a week. We had coffee Sunday mornings. That was a treat, because we had tea, you know, being English. Sunday mornings we had codfish and coffee for a special Sunday morning breakfast.

RMM: How was the codfish cooked?

SB: Boiled, and then it had a white sauce poured over it, which the Cousin Jacks called "dippy," because it wasn't completely white sauce. It had this special Coleman's mustard, so it was golden.

RMM: And this was something special that the Cousin Jacks –

SB: Yeah.

RMM: What did they call it?

SB: The sauce was called dippy.

RMM: Oh, so something that you would dip the codfish in.

SB: Right.

RMM: Did you pour it on the codfish?

SB: We poured it over it. It's like you use white sauce on salmon, or whatever.

RMM: So you'd make it like a white sauce, except you'd put Coleman's mustard in it.

SB: Right. When I was in England this one time with my friend Carol, the one who gave me your book, we made some sandwiches, we were going on a picnic. This is in Penzance. Carol spread my sandwich with Coleman's mustard. It's terribly burning, you know. She just figured it was regular mustard, like we would use.

RMM: Oh, yeah, that would be flaming hot.

SB: Slightly burning!

RMM: Now, when they made this sauce, they didn't make it hot. They just –

SB: It was hot, it was hot.

RMM: Yeah.

SB: When you make your white sauce, you have to boil it. So it was a hot sauce.

RMM: But I meant, it was not spicy hot. Just the flavor of the mustard.

SB: Right.

RMM: Okay. They didn't burn a lot of mouths (**rest is unclear**). Do you have the recipe for that?

SB: No, I don't.

RMM: But it's just boiled codfish – did they have potatoes with it, boiled potatoes?

SB: No, not on Sunday mornings, we didn't. If we had that for a meal, we would have potatoes and a vegetable. But not Sunday mornings.

RMM: Would they boil the potatoes with the codfish? Same pot?

SB: No, I don't think so. It's separate.

RMM: Okay. On Sunday morning, then, you would have what would amount to –

SB: And bread and butter. Bread and butter, and the codfish.

RMM: And the codfish with the sauce.

SB: Right. A great big plank of fish. And then it had to be soaked for a day or so, to get all of that intense salt out of it.

RMM: Italians eat codfish that way. They usually boil it and serve it with garlic, parsley, and oil.

SB: Yeah, that's pretty much like it.

RMM: And at times eggs and potatoes would be in it. Or you could just eat it plain.

SB: The Italians used more sauces. We didn't seem to use many sauces and things. We just ate them plainer, some way. Just butter.

RMM: You went to high school in Ishpeming, and you went to the Methodist church?

SB: Uh huh.

RMM: Were your father or mother good singers?

SB: My mother was a good singer. My father didn't sing, but he was very musical. He played the violin.

RMM: So he would entertain you at home, then?

SB: Oh sure. I'd sit on the piano and play, and he'd play the fiddle with me.

RMM: So we get everybody in line: the name of your father?

SB: Richard. My brother's name was Harry. I didn't know this before, either, but did you know that Harry is a nickname? It's a nickname for Henry.

RMM: So was he Harold?

SB: No, they actually baptized him Harry, because they said that that's what he'd be called, anyway. No there's a big ferry crossing the Foul (?) River in Felmoth, and it's called the King Harry Ferry.

RMM: So your father was Richard. Your mother's name?

SB: Catherine.

RMM: And what was her maiden name?

SB: Jones.

RMM: And then the twins?

SB: Their picture is up here. Can you see the tools, the one with the tools? They're there, those twins. My father made those tools with a pen knife, to show the boys different tools. The other one was Thomas. Thomas died when he was eight, from polio.

RMM: And who are the two boys then?

SB: Thomas and Harry.

RMM: And then there was yourself?

SB: And myself, that's all.

RMM: And you were born here?

SB: In Ishpeming.

RMM: And they were both born in?

SB: In Cornwall.

RMM: How did you decide to go to college, and did your parents encourage you? How did that happen?

SB: No. Nobody did anything. In high school I always wanted to be a teacher, so there was no problem to it. I just came from high school to Northern.

RMM: How did you get down here, back at that time?

SB: By train.

RMM: Were there a lot of other students coming down from Ishpeming that could take (unclear)?

SB: Sure, that was their way to come. There was, as I remember, very little commuting, because of the lack of transportation. No cars, see. So, you had a suggestion on your paper, there. Most of the students roomed in private homes all over town. In fact, the big white house up here on Third – my brother roomed there.

RMM: Third and what?

SB: Big house next to the bank, there. There's a big white house. He roomed there, I remember. So when they finally got there, they stayed put, see.

RMM: So you weren't going back and forth on a daily basis. You came down and stayed for –

SB: No, after I graduated from high school, my family moved to Marquette. Right here, to this house. So, I was home.

RMM: And right around the corner from Northern.

SB: Right. Easy to walk there, you know. What they did, you could never do it from Ishpeming, or certainly from England, but it gave my brother and myself a chance to go to college.

RMM: So you came down, and what year did you start at Northern?

SB: I graduated from high school in '22. It was either that fall or the early spring of '23. I don't remember exactly. It was either that fall of '22 or the spring of '23.

RMM: When you came here, what did you think of Northern? What was the place like? You had Kaye Hall, Kaye Hall was built, everything was built then. What did you think of the place?

SB: I liked it. I like school, so I'm never a complainer about anything like that.

RMM: Did the students enjoy that atrium that used to be in the center of the building?

SB: If they were allowed to. They weren't allowed to collect very much there.

RMM: No, they wanted them to move along.

SB: Exactly. However, when you think of the substitute for it, it doesn't have an iota of anything artistic. It's like a brown box. But to enter Northern was lovely, because you came in on marble floors, and the auditorium was on the second floor, so you had these lovely marble steps going up to the auditorium. There was an art to it, wasn't there, that we don't have now? [We] all have to move so fast, doing what I'm not sure, but isn't that true?

RMM: Who were some of your instructors? You mentioned –

SB: I listed some of them for you so I'd remember. Everybody was talking about Reynolds Hall and Hedgecock. You want me to tell you about Hedgecock? He was a really nice fellow. He was the head of the whole physical education department. I'll have to tell you about something personal connected with him. He used to go out and watch the different basketball games, case them, to get students to come back from Northern. So he came to Newberry. He chose two of the fellows that were my students. One was called Clifford Pucket, and the other was French, Lafronier or something like that. Now, here is Hedgecock's personality. These were the times of the Depression, so you young ones don't even know how depressed that was, or have you ever had any experience of wanting? Anyway, so Hedgecock contacted the two boys and sent them each two dollars and fifty cents, which was the railroad fare from Newberry to Marquette. They used to laugh – he was very careful about money. He didn't squander anything. So, he was to meet the boys, and he must've found some little jobs of some kind for them, because here they were on the wings of the world, those two kids. And they were both from real large families, so they could never have gone anywhere. So Hedgecock said to the boys, "Don't worry about dressing. If there's a formal affair or anything like that, just wear your ordinary suit and your white shirt." But he said, "Go to the dime store" Woolworth's was here then, and for ten cents, you could get a quarter of a yard of black (unclear word) ribbon, "and you can make yourself a tie for your white shirt." How well I remember that. Both of those went into the FBI.

RMM: The Newberry boys.

SB: Yeah.

RMM: You were familiar with Hedgecock. You said you had former president Kaye for a class. Do you remember his personality?

SB: While I was going to Northern he was president. But later, he left – I don't know what other school he went to, I can't tell you –

RMM: He retired.

SB: Did he retire then?

RMM: He retired to a farm in Scotsville, east of Luddington.

SB: Well, that's the answer to that. Anyway, like some of them do, President Kaye came back.

RMM: Now, he would come back in the winter, when he couldn't farm. So, he was teaching in the winter.

SB: See, I never thought of that. Anyway, I took a class from him, a class in ethics. It was one of the most beautiful classes I think I've ever had. He was a lovely gentleman. He was one of these typical, especially upright English gentlemen, you know the type. Very precise and good.

RMM: Did he speak with an English accent?

SB: No. I can't tell you that. It might've been slight, like leaving off r's. I think he did speak more, a little bit like a London accent, but not as exaggerated.

RMM: Was he a pleasant (unclear word)?

SB: Oh, he was lovely. A real lovely gentleman to know. He had one son. I think he went into teaching.

RMM: Do you remember, was he in Marquette, or had left Marquette? The son.

SB: Seems to me, the son had a job in Munising for a while. They've become older people themselves.

RMM: And now they could even be passed on.

SB: I'd hate to hear the ages of my pupils, you know. [laughter]

RMM: So you had him for the class, you'd go to his wonderful class. How about Lou Allen Chase? You had him for a class.

SB: Yes, [taps on something, presumably a book] out of this textbook.

RMM: That's, "State Government of Michigan." And what kind of a personality was he.

SB: He was a different personality, because he was legally blind. I don't know if today if you would call that macular degeneration. They didn't understand those things like they do now. But they always said that he had "pinhole sight."

RMM: It was something called pigmatosis.

SB: It was really strange, anyway. He bumped into Abraham Lincoln in the hall one day, and said, "Excuse me!" The kids all laughed about that.

RMM: People saw this happen?

SB: Yeah. But, he was very brilliant. I can't prove this, but I've heard that his wife practically read him through college. Here, he had a whole set of students who were readers. All day long, certain periods, and paid them. He was so sharp, you'd almost think he knew the number

of the page, you know. He was really sharp. I not only had the government, but I had a world geography class from him also. He just, he knew the world. And he was also a good piano player. Once he played at a concert, I remember, at Northern. We were kind of surprised. I liked him. I never had any trouble with teachers. If you behave yourself, you can like any teacher. Some are more personable than others, but . . .

RMM: Just between Kaye and Chase, there was a difference between the two of them?

SB: Chase was [an] all-American guy. But Kaye was what you call an English gentleman.

RMM: So more charming, and –

SB: Oh yes, very charming. Chase wasn't charming. He was on the ball.

RMM: Kind of to the point?

SB: Rough with the students. We had to know what was going on.

RMM: Didn't he sort of interrogate the students in class? He would ask you the reading assignment, or whatever you were supposed to have in the class – he'd go to each student and ask them?

SB: I don't remember that, but all I do remember is, I wondered why he knew the textbook so well without seeing. His wife must have trained him.

RMM: Or he probably compensated with a photographic memory.

SB: There's something there.

RMM: Do you remember the old football field, behind old Kaye Hall?

SB: Sure.

RMM: Could you talk a little about that? Did you go to games there?

SB: The games we went to mostly, they –

TAPE ONE ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

RMM: So you went to basketball games, that was pretty standard.

SB: Oh yes.

RMM: Were there any clubs that either had to belong to or belonged to at Northern?

SB: Yeah. It seemed that they divided the whole student body into two groups. One was called the Osiris, and the other was called Egrazil, or something like that. You were just placed in one or the other, so there were those two big student groups.

RMM: And what sort of activities did they have?

SB: It's so long ago, see.

RMM: Sort of have, poetry readings or dances?

SB: Yeah, they had dances ,and parties, and just kind of, ordinary things. Simpler things in those days.

RMM: But the students – obviously, nobody lived on campus, so at the end of the day, the campus was empty.

SB: Sure. The rooming houses were all over town, and that's the way a lot of these people got their living – by rooming students and feeding them. There were several special boarding houses that everybody knew of, where they'd take in 35 or 40 for eating.

RMM: So these students would come from other boarding houses where they had rooms, and would come to this central one for the meal. Were there any facilities on campus for meals or anything at that time?

SB: Not then. Later on, when they built Lee Hall, one side of it was a cafeteria. That was the first I remember of any like that up there. People weren't always eating like they are now. You notice how many fat girls there are around? [laughter]

RMM: Didn't there used to be a restaurant up the street here, like a block away? Up on the corner of Kaye and Presque Isle?

SB: Yeah. The church is there now.

RMM: Oh, there used to be a place there?

SB: That was it, right there. That was the (unclear word). And for a while it was kind of like a coffee shop, not a regular eating restaurant, I don't think. It was kind of a get-together place and a coffee shop.

RMM: A counter and booths, a quick snack or something.

SB: That's the type of thing it was.

RMM: Do you remember the name of it?

SB: I can't think of it.

RMM: When you were living in this area, was it built up, or was it still pretty much open – people were building houses around here?

SB: This was mostly built up. Houses were here, older houses.

RMM: Did you take any courses in home economics?

SB: No, I didn't. I stuck more to the sciences and the histories and that.

RMM: Then, how about some of the faculty there, the faculty – Lucius Hunt. Did you have him for any classes?

SB: No, I didn't have him, but I knew him, and his wife.

RMM: Could you tell us a little about him?

SB: They were different, I guess. He was tall, like a beanpole, and she was real fat. They made a different looking kind of couple. As teachers, I have no idea, but kids used to come and laugh at them. It was kind of odd, you know.

RMM: And you probably remember Ethel Cary, the dean of women. Do you have stories about her, or things that she did?

SB: She and I, we were always real friendly. But a lot of the girls didn't like her at all. She was too strict to please them. Of course, if you do things wrong, you don't like people, you know how it goes. I think in one of these readings, somewhere, I read [that] she didn't like red. That was too suggestive. One time – you know, upstairs of Lee Hall used to be events, and then it went into photography – anyway, the kids were going to have the red lights. They weren't allowed to. That's kind of foolish, you know.

RMM: So that was actually something that happened.

SB: Yeah. But I wasn't in trouble with it.

RMM: You had talked about your brother Harold, or Harry, and his interest in the radio. Could you tell us a little about that?

SB: When he graduated from Northern, he got a teaching job in Chassel. And just exactly when he retired from it, or left it, he joined the Navy. His training in the Navy was the radio field. In fact, his group were trained at, what's the big university?

RMM: University of Michigan?

SB: No, out east. Harvard, they were trained at Harvard.

RMM: This is during World War I?

SB: Right. My brother wasn't drafted, he offered to train. I remember this distinctly, that the rich boys who were paid off laughed at them, these sailor boys. Isn't that funny how the richest place you into some kind of a class that's hard to describe? But my brother, that turned him off, though. He thought to himself, "Here you're offering your service to your country, and you're being laughed at for being here to be trained." So later on, after the war was over – he had a lot of different types of skills, you see. He was also a very excellent violinist, you know. Anyway, he decided that he would like to be paid to see the world. His last job of that type, he was the radio operator on the steamship *Republic*, from the American steamship line. That particular ship was donated, kind of like a tourist ship. In the winter they went from Philadelphia, to the West Indies, to the Panama Canal zone and back, and in the summer they went to South Hampton and Breston, Bremmerhaven (?). That was quite a job. When they were in port in Bremmerhaven, it was long enough [that with] the money that he had earned so far, he and some other guys chartered a plane and got down over (unknown city name, sounds like "Emigeau"). And time to get back to their ship again.

RMM: But then when he came back, after the war, you were saying that he was very interested in radios and built one for you?

SB: He went back to teaching. He taught the stringed instruments in Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio. He always had these different things, and he seemed to be real tops in them, you know, you've seen people like that. That always bothers me because I settle, you know. He came back to Northern, then, it was back at the time that I was. He was real friendly with Mr. Chase and some of these others. Pop Louis was a physics teacher, and the report that my brother got was – "Easy on the work," it said (somewhat ambiguous phrasing). When he got called on this certain day, he wasn't listening because he was drawing a radio on the end of his book, on the leaf. He actually introduced radio to Northern, by monkeying with Louis and the science guys. I think I told you that he expected my mother to dump out the oatmeal, so he could have the box. So she'd get the one-pounders instead of the big ones, and he'd wind it with the wire, and everything like that. So at night we would have radio.

RMM: He went on to work with President Kaye, and they put together a radio station.

SB: They must've done it at Northern, yeah. [The] radio thing that he gave me, it's hard to – where's your pen, I'll show you what mine was like. It was a monodyne.

RMM: And this was something he built for you.

SB: That I can't tell you. It didn't look like that. Where would he get one like that? He must've built it! It was just a wooden frame, and drilled in on the metal, and then this one tube.

RMM: You have some other faculty members that I didn't ask you about. Could you tell us a little about them, just go down the list?

SB: Well Dr. Lowell (?), that everybody was scared of. I was reading some things recently where the students said they were scared of him. I was never scared of him, and I'm not the bravest either. One day, I told him, I said, "The way you are, I'll bet you would've like a little daughter like me."

RMM: Was he just kind of a gruff person?

SB: He'd been in the service, and I think he thought he was carrying it over yet. At that time, quite a few of the servicemen were coming back to Northern under the GI Bill, and the one fellow I'll never forget, Paul Coleman, from the Copper Country. Lowell was so mean, pretending to be. Paul Coleman said, "The job I had in the Army was to practice the young doctors, drill them. And if I'd had you, I would've drilled you until you couldn't see straight." [laughter] The (unclear word) told him. I think he liked that kind of thing. You've seen people like that, that are so important, that it's a sham.

RMM: What did he teach?

SB: Biology. I'll just have to tell you this one thing about him. I was in this biology class, it was an advanced biology class. Anyway, a full class, but he would never stay in the class. It seemed like he'd get you started, in the lab or something, and he'd be gone. I don't know if they can see what we're doing, anyway. At that time, to get a job, the superintendent used to come here. You didn't have all this communication like you do now. So one day, this one young man got a notice that there was a superintendent from a certain place [who] would like to interview him for teaching. Off he went. After a while he came back, and it was natural, you know, everybody's asking, what did he say, or did you have any luck, and that. And while they disturbing like that, in comes Lowell. This is the kind he was, and I'll have to tell you what I was doing. At that time I was at one of the tables by myself, and I was extricating the spinal cord of the frog. So here he comes blustering in. "Everybody out!" He fired everybody. But I didn't go. Do you think I was a poor sport? Because it was right in the middle of working on that frog, didn't want to destroy – you know how hard to get the spinal cord. So I just sat there and worked. I felt guilty, that I probably should've gone out with the mob, but I didn't. I don't know why I was so brave. Then they all have to go to the president – must've been President Kaye – to get permission to get back into class again! One of my friends lived over on Magnetic. It was eleven in the morning, [and] she came home. Her mother said to her, "How come you're home so early?" And she was so austere and such a good student. She said, "I got kicked out

of class!” [laughter] It sounded so dumb, you know. So they had to go and belittle themselves. They had permits to get back to –

RMM: Oh, so they did have to go to the president.

SB: Sure. Wasn't it dumb? He was using his Army stuff, I don't know. I don't know why I wasn't scared of him, but I guess I had him analyzed. Just a bunch of nothing, you know.

RMM: So then, at some point you made the comment about having a daughter.

SB: Yeah. He laughed.

RMM: So you didn't put up with this guy.

SB: He knew that was true, see.

RMM: Was he married?

SB: Yes. He didn't have any children. They built a nice house on College [Avenue].

RMM: Anybody else? I think you have Lautner down there.

SB: Lautner. You know this house up on the corner, that never looks like it's been painted? That was the home he had built for his wife. It was really quite a building, even sent to England for the Sheffield steel frames for the windows. It was really quite something. He was German, and he had German characteristics. He had a bench in his classroom, so he set it up higher. Looking down on the students, see. I liked him a lot, but he was kind of strict. Had that strict German characteristic in him.

RMM: Was he from Germany? Did he speak in a German accent?

SB: No, but he must've had relatives. They must've been from immigrants, I should think. He never got his doctorate. Everything was ready for it, and there was another person who had the same topic. He never got his doctorate. My brother was real friendly with the Lowells [*I think she means Lautner here – a bit later she does the same thing and corrects herself*], too. My brother helped build their cabin out at Middle Island Point, on the top?

RMM: Built, I think, in a Norwegian design?

SB: Exactly. Mr. Lowell – er, Mr. Lautner, we would say now, got Alzheimer's I'm sure. They kept him on a little too long, out of heart, and he wasn't doing right. They finally had to retire him. He was a beautiful gentleman. I liked him a lot.

RMM: Do you remember the Heart of Northern, that used to be on the [lost in crosstalk]? Could you tell us a little about it?

SB: Well, it was landscaped, so that there were two hearts. And when they had spring festivities, the woman gym teacher had taught them ballet, and she did ballet, you know

RMM: On the heart? Used as kind of a stage?

SB: Yeah, used it as a stage. That was kind of interesting.

RMM: Did the students used to go out there and study on it? Was it used?

SB: Not so much. They weren't allowed to very much. I don't think Northern – maybe Kaye would be like that too – didn't like them all over the place. As I remember, there was very little of that.

RMM: So it was used more for formal functions. You'd take pictures of the band playing on it, or somebody would have spring presentations.

SB: Exactly. They were more formal in those days. Now is there any formality left?

RMM: Well, now the kids go and, I've noticed this, the part that's still there they're tearing up with the skateboards. They go up with the skateboard and they rip the soil down. So it was used on special occasions?

SB: Sure. And kept beautifully. It was highly respected.

RMM: Do you remember, what was the idea behind it? Having the heart, maintaining it, and so on.

SB: I think it was the characteristic of the presidents. That's what they wanted, something that had high respect to it, and was kind of like an alma mater.

RMM: Actually, a heart, the Heart of Northern.

SB: Right. That's the feeling I had, anyway.

RMM: Do you remember any of the presidents, or anybody talking about it, faculty or anybody? Or was it just there?

SB: President Lee. He was in charge of placing student teachers and so forth, that type of thing. He was the one that used to face us in the auditorium and give us all sorts of talks: on our dress, and the keeping of the campus. Now, when there's so many, there's not that personal contact. You can't get a group together and scold them, you know. It's just not like that, is it?

RMM: So we would do that?

SB: Yes. [It would] get quite personal on the way he didn't like certain girls, the way they were dressing.

RMM: And he would call them on it?

SB: Sure.

RMM: Were you there when Munsen (?) was president? Could you tell us a little about your memories of him?

SB: Nothing personal at all except, he was liked. He was a big guy, and a smiling, pleasant guy. That's my reaction. I didn't have anything personal to do with him, but he'd smile at a student as you pass, and people liked him.

RMM: When you were in that building with that court, the atrium, and so on, did you see the presidents? When you were in class, would you pass them in the hallway?

SB: Oh sure.

RMM: So they were somewhat accessible?

SB: Very accessible. They were all accessible, sure. Or sometimes you could see them sitting in their office – then it was more exposed, you know. Or passing in the halls, and they would greet you, which was a nice feeling.

RMM: So you would say in general that Northern was more of a pleasant, smaller institution then?

SB: Yes, because it was smaller. There was a togetherness to it. You can't have that now, when we spread out in large numbers. It's colder.

RMM: You had mentioned earlier, when we started, you were talking about the old dormitory, this picture with the old dormitory. Could you go over that again? The building here's running east and west.

SB: The west end had living quarters for whoever lived there. [They] took charge and care of the dormitory. And I told you that the couple – they probably succeeded that first president, evidently. They were called Hosking – H O S K I N G. They had one son. I told you that's where the girls had their dormitory, and I told you my brother ate with them, because he fired the furnace, a little job. Just to show you the difference, when I think of kids lining up up here to get an ice cream cone for a dollar and a half. Well, mother – you can see that my brother

stayed down here. My mother would write a note to him once in a while from Ishpeming, you know. Once in a while put a dime in the envelope. Guess what he did with it? He bought a can of sardines. She sent for an ice cream cone, see? Different, isn't it?

RMM: The other person that you might've had contact with was Lydia Olson, in the library?

SB: Yeah, but just as a librarian. I had no personal contact with her. Just pictures.

RMM: Do you remember her personality, or what people said about her?

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO ENDS

TAPE TWO

RMM: Okay, side two. Interview with Sarah Bottrell. Okay, Sarah, could you tell us a little about [where] the presidents lived.

SB: We mentioned Latner's house. That row of houses there, the next one was the president of the college's home, always. That was where they lived.

RMM: What presidents do you remember?

SB: The first one would've been Kaye, and quite a [few]. When it changed, I don't remember where they lived when there was a change. Whether it was on College someplace. But the present home of the president, that's relatively new.

RMM: I think Kaye lived someplace on the East side, and then later on, Webster Pierce, in the 1930s lived over here, and Tate lived here.

SB: Yeah, there were several of them that lived in that house. I hadn't thought of that as naturally, for ages, you know.

RMM: You had mentioned to me about the flu epidemic of 1918-1919. Could you tell us a little about that?

SB: In the first place, at the beginning here, he [presumably referring to a book at hand] says that they think that the flu epidemic was spread by birds. I had to laugh – they're talking about today, say you had birds in the belfry, you know. It wasn't that. It was spread by rats and filth of the trenches. That was true. It wasn't by birds. And then it said that they suspected that the soldiers returning home had brought some of this back. Here they called it "the Spanish flu." They didn't call it the Spanish flu, it was called "the German influenza." That's a discrepancy. He says in 1918 newspapers were the only form of mass communication. He says there were no telephones – that's not true. There were telephones. And then he says, no television or radio. Well, radio was beginning, but there were telephones. He's got it wrong there. This is

another thing. "The majority of the people of the county lived in logging camps." [laughs] I don't know where he got [that]. I lived in Ishpeming, where there were 10,000 people. You call that a logging camp? That's wrong. There were logging camps, sure, but Negaunee, Marquette, Ishpeming, these were cities. Sure, way out in the woods, like Big Bay or Gwinn, sure there were logging camps. But it sounded like that's what we were. That wasn't right.

RMM: And the logging camps were only temporary. They were there while they cut the trees, and then they moved on.

SB: Sure.

Our first cases of influenza came from Newberry, that's a true statement. This particular year, it was time to go to Newberry and start school. Usually first of September. We were only there one week when we were dismissed for a full month, because the polio was rampaging.

RMM: Oh, this is when you were teaching.

SB: Yes. Then I think it kind of subsided, but then it broke out again. We had gone back to teach again, and then we were dismissed again for another full week. You should see the time we had, trying to make up our 180 days. We couldn't come home for New Years. I think we went on Saturdays. We went all the time to try to make as close to the 180 days as we could, with all that time off. One of my star pupils got it. She had it in both lungs, both arms, and both legs. I used to visit her at the hospital here, in the iron lung. That was really something. She was an all-A student, and had to come down with that. She revived, but was crippled. The last thing she did, she was a secretary in the Memorial Hospital at the Sioux, because she could use an electric typewriter, that type of thing. Every summer at Baycliff, that was her outing. She did office work, she would come up to Baycliff. It was sad to be destroyed like that.

RMM: And here, she was an excellent student.

SB: Yeah. It was (unclear) epidemic. This doctor was stationed at Newberry. He was the tri-county health doctor. He met all these places where it was popping out, all over the place. I saw the map. It was from the outdoor toilets. That's kind of interesting. That's never recorded anywhere. He himself caught the polio from his baby, and could never lift his head up straight again. That's realistic of what had happened.

RMM: Today we don't even think about it, because we have the vaccine. But at that time, you were –

SB: That's another thing I was gonna tell you, -

RMM: This is now back in (unclear).

SB: - where he went wrong on this. Anyway, he said there was no known thing they could do. However – see, this probably has never been recorded – all of us school kids in Ishpeming had to go to the Ishpeming hospital three different times, and we had an injection. That’s something that wouldn’t be [known]. We don’t know what the doctors knew to do that to us, but at least they were trying, weren’t they? It maybe something connected with a cold, but we had three injections, three different times, in the hospital.

RMM: Did any of your friends or anything get the flu at that time?

SB: My friend’s family did get it, other members of the family. But nobody in my family got it. How fortunate we were. I saw one of our neighbors taken out on a stretcher, right across the street, to die. Just think of that.

RMM: So it was kind of gloomy, and it was a very, very difficult time.

SB: Oh yes. How lucky we were that we didn’t get it, though. They don’t have it right here, about the closing of places, but it got so bad that they had to close any place where people communicated. So, churches, theatres, meetings, anything you could name, were closed. However, they broke the rule, the day of the armistice, for one hour. The Methodist church in Ishpeming was very large, so that could hold an ecumenical meeting. The other churches were smaller. So they met one hour to praise God for the armistice. Just the one hour. And everybody had to leave again.

The day of the armistice I’ll never forget. I would’ve been junior high, maybe fourteen. Every whistle, everything that could blow, blew for about 24 hours. All the mine whistles, the trains, anything, and besides the people around town with whistles. An older lady near us had two sons in France, and she came out with a galvanized dish pan and a big spoon, and she was doing it up and down the block, how I remember that. All of this happiness of the armistice, it was something to remember.

RMM: But the other part – people don’t realize that they couldn’t celebrate because of the flu. You couldn’t have congregations.

SB: No. We would normally have had parties and – boy, just that one hour at the church.

RMM: And during the fall there, Northern closed, and was closed for the whole semester, the whole fall semester, during the school epidemic.

SB: See, I wasn’t conscious of it, because I was teaching in Newberry. But I was conscious of going to the hospital to meet Barbara in her iron lung.

RMM: When you got done with Northern, you graduated. Could you tell us a little about your teaching career? Where did you go to teach?

SB: In Newberry.

RMM: How did you get that job?

SB: By writing for it, and was accepted.

RMM: So you just heard about the job, and then sent your letter

SB: Yeah, that was lucky, you know.

RMM: And how long did you teach there?

SB: 27 years.

RMM: Which was from 1927?

SB: No, I think it would be '25, because I came back for a little bit to get some more courses, as I remember.

RMM: Did you get a four year degree, or you got a certification?

SB: Do you know about those two-year certificates? That's what we got, and that's what my brother got. So I graduated twice. After two years, at the time, you could teach in any of the grades from K to 12 on the two-year, it was called a Life Certificate. Later on the state changed it so that, even if you had a Life Certificate, every so often you had to come back for refresher subjects.

RMM: So that's why you remembered Northern at a later time, because you had to come back when you went there (**unclear**).

SB: Yeah.

RMM: So you taught from 'till about 1952?

SB: No, 1970.

RMM: I mean, in Newberry.

SB: Oh, 27 years. Yeah. The reason I left – my mother had diabetes, and she was having to have the second leg taken off. We had it hard, you know. That final year I just taught up to Thanksgiving, and then came home and realized that I could not go back. I had to break my contract.

RMM: So that was in the early 50s?

SB: '53.

RMM: And then what did you do after that? Teach around here?

SB: At first I didn't have anything. It's funny how I never even gave a thought about how I was going to live. It was more important to take care of my mother. So it was all the rest of that year, way until September of the following I got a job here.

RMM: September of '54.

SB: It must've been that, yeah.

RMM: And then you taught here, where, at Grey Beret (?)?

SB: Grey Beret was the high school.

RMM: At the high school, until '72.

SB: And the last, how many years, we went to the new high school. That's where I finished in 1970.

RMM: Do you have any memories of teaching for the first time in that way in Newberry? Where did you live when you were teaching there?

SB: The teachers all lived in different family houses just like students did here. You boarded with them, also. However, in the later years none of them did that, so we always had to eat our dinner at the Newberry Hotel.

RMM: You stayed at a private home and then ate at the hotel?

SB: Yeah.

RMM: So all the teachers would meet there and have dinner together?

SB: Yeah, quite a few of us.

RMM: What were the students like at that time? Did you have any problems with them?

SB: No. I wasn't very big, you know, smaller than all the kids, but I have never had trouble with discipline. And the same out here. I think that's why they put extra work on me lots of times, if the truth is only know. Also, all the student teachers they gave me. One year at Grey Beret I had thirteen. What do you think of that? Besides all the kids that I had to teach. I had two at a time. They were interesting, though. We learned a lot, too.

In one class I had two brothers, and one was an ex-GI. The other brother, younger, was still – they were both going to Northern, yet. Well, going again, and the other for the first time. The kids were really sweet. They called them the young one and the old one. With real respect, you know. The older one said to me one day, “I bet you don’t know how I saw Franklin Roosevelt.” Through his periscope. Things like that. We had a lot of experiences with the different GIs. I had one class with five of them, and they all sat together in the back row. I’ve often thought to myself, if that had been their former age, there’d be a lot of elbowing, I think. Wouldn’t there, with five boys? And here are five men who’d been all over the world.

RMM: And this was at Northern, you say?

SB: At Grey Beret.

RMM: Oh, at Grey Beret. Oh, they were the student teachers.

SB: Right.

RMM: So you had as many as thirteen in a year?

SB: Yes I did. No pay. Don’t forget that. From Northern they figured that it was quite an honor for us, to have that. It was more than honor; there was a lot of work. You kind of have to start over again each time a new teacher would come, with the roll and all kinds of things like that. I got along real good with them, though.

RMM: Today you only have one during a semester if you take them, and they try to keep it under control. So a teacher’s not getting somebody new every year. They’ll do it every other year, or something. They really made you work.

SB: Even my last work, here, for small pay. Why are they always against education, for paying. The public, especially. I had \$165 a day. That’s beating your brains, you know. And think of the exams! That was hard work. On top of that they’d make you a class advisor, or all other kinds of things you had to do. I lived through it some way. Besides taking care of my mother. That was not easy, you know.

RMM: You lived here, then, pretty much all your life, except when you went to Newberry.

SB: Yeah, it was my family home, anyway.

RMM: So you stayed here, when you were taking care of your mother, and then when you taught school.

SB: Something nice about that – there’s a security to that, did you ever think of that?

RMM: I’m originally from San Francisco, and –

SB: The 'home' part of it has a lot of value to me. It's such a stabilizing thing.

RMM: You went to Northern, but you've had a long association with the school because you're so close to it. So you did things, and you – like, you were aware of some of the (unclear word – 'outgoing'?) presidents.

SB: I joined the sorority, the alpha xi deltas, the second year I was at Northern. I wasn't a charter member, but I was the next group there, so I would go back to their meetings or parties.

RMM: I think they had a picture of you in the paper, recently, at a sorority function or something. There's something I have in my office. It was clipped out – it was just something somebody gave me, and you're in the picture.

SB: For my birthday, the bell rang, and there were several of them with a dozen pink roses for me. And they make those big banners. I didn't even know it was there at first, it was at night. A banner floating about my birthday that they had out there, tucked on the porch. They've always been real nice to me.

RMM: You were a Newberry teacher, and so on. What were the 1930s like, in terms of the community, and what you had to live through?

SB: Down there, you mean? I can tell you, we lived through the Depression. There was the one bank, and it was closed for three years. It was a state bank, and it had done all our business with the big bank in Detroit. That's the one that busts, the Detroit thing, and then these others were gone, too. So, anything about money, I would come home and have to do something with the bank here. I don't know, with the pay they gave ya, how I accumulated \$100. I had \$100 in the Newberry state bank when it closed. I got a bank certificate three years later for \$85. What if that had been a million?

RMM: I thought maybe they paid you with interest, so you got \$125, but you got \$85.

SB: No, I got \$85 out of \$100. The state – isn't it comical how the federal government and the state can do things illegal that we can't do?

RMM: You'd be in jail.

SB: Right, with a loaf of bread you'd be in jail. But anyway, during that awful time the state borrowed money from our teacher's pension. Now that's not legal.

RMM: Did they put it back?

SB: Eventually they must have. However, that month, for my teaching for the whole month I got \$85. That's something about the depression. And this is just an incident, but there were several of us who were especially friendly. The teachers, you know, how [some] people you like better than others. We would, after school, go down to the corner drug store, just relax, and just have a cup of coffee or a dish of ice cream. Just like half an hour before you'd go home, you know? Our superintendent asked us, would we not please do that, because there were people passing who were out of work, and it looked like we were rich. We spent a nickel for a Coke. So we obeyed. Isn't that something, though? That was a recommendation of the superintendent, please not do it. So then we used to go over one or the other of the houses after. One time we were having so much fun, we were playing the piano and singing and stuff. The door opened, and it was one of the teachers – it was a married teacher – it was her husband, coming home from work. It was six o'clock already. He was a comical nature, anyway. He looked us all over, and he said to his life, "Viola, are they still here?" [laughter] You can imagine how we got our coats and we beat it. That was cute, I'll never forget it.

RMM: But you did keep your job through the Depression, weathered it.

SB: Yes. You couldn't be married, either. If you got married you lost your job.

RMM: And that continued through your . . . ?

SB: Sure. And now there's hardly anybody who isn't married who's teaching. That's the way they were.

RMM: Anything I missed?

SB: I don't really remember. Also, being in the logging camps, you know.

RMM: How about this one fellow, Hamby (?)?

SB: Oh, that's a lady. She was the head of the music department. She was very similar to President Kaye, because she and her family had come from London. So, she was a London lady. And a lovely teacher. I had music appreciation courses from her. I'll never forget the one exam, it was hair-raising. We had to compose a piece, and then we had to change it into a different key. Could you do that? Wasn't that hard, though?

RMM: And this was just a general music course. You weren't a music major.

SB: Yeah. That was quite something. I composed my sorority song, you know. The Alpha Xis, composed the music.

RMM: And this was just from this class, or how'd you learn to do that?

SB: I don't know. Just from school. Ishpeming was high on music. They had excellent music all the way through. When we were in eighth grade, when some of the boys' voices were already changing, we could sing four parts.

TAPE TWO SIDE A END

TAPE TWO SIDE B

SB: When you think back, it was quite a wonderful thing to do. Every Friday, the entire school had to meet in the auditorium, and we became a chorus of four parts. The whole high school. All four grades. The school board had beautiful books, so at least there was enough for one for every two, all through the thing. We learned pieces of opera, and beautiful folk songs. The whole school singing; had all this ever been done anywhere else? Every Friday afternoon we became a chorus.

RMM: When you were going to Northern, did they used to have, I think at one point early, they called it chapel, but it was kind of a convocation. Every once a week they would have, kind of like the high school thing, but not the same. Somebody would come in and talk about their trip, or how you should be dressing, and things like that.

SB: Yeah, about once a week, I think. The whole gang. Now you can't face a whole gang, there's no such thing.

RMM: Well, you could put them in the Dome.

SB: Right. But a lot of us, we remember different things that they told us. They impressed us, you know.

RMM: Is there anything I've left out to ask you, or something you want to add?

SB: I don't know of anything. I had marked those things I talked – he thought we were just a bunch of lumber camps, that was for the birds. And I told you that he said there were no telephones. There certainly were. He says, "For transportation, people outside the city limits relied on a horse and carriage to get them around." And in this case, for medical care: "The only options were to treat the symptoms of fever and cough with liquids and rest." I don't know what else he said that, some things that were wrong, anyway. So, they did give us shots, see. Kind of interesting, isn't it, when you think? Maybe it did do some good, because I didn't get it, but I did have the shots.

Oh, I was going to tell you about one incident, though, that I didn't like. We'd be called, maybe, like into the gym, and we'd line up our class, our homeroom, to get the polio shot.

RMM: Polio or flu?

SB: Polio. Yeah, you got an injection. Here you stood at the back of the line of like, thirty or thirty-five kids, and then, that was it, you were there. And they wouldn't give us the shot. I didn't think that was right, because we were handling all the kids that were getting –

RMM: Oh, you mean the teachers didn't get the shots.

SB: No, they wouldn't give us. Twice. The second time, we had that same thing. The first time we had a shot – we didn't but the kids did. And the second time, they got it on a sugar cube. And they wouldn't give us, give the teachers. Would it hurt them, though? Didn't seem right, did it?

RMM: That was in the 1960, 1960s, I think.

SB: We weren't worth anything, see. We were just, hand me all the kids that were coming down with it. Another thing that I saw, I'll bet you the authors don't know it anymore, either. I discovered that these pupils of mine who got it had had their tonsils out. The kids with tonsils didn't get it. [That] tell you something? The tonsils have a real value, see. It was just like an in-thing in those days. Everybody'd have his tonsils out; if you had a little sore throat or something, they'd take your tonsils out. Those kids were the ones that got the polio.

RMM: That had them out.

SB: Yes sir. I've never told a doctor that.

RMM: That's interesting, because when I was a kid, and I think everybody else, that would've been in the 1950s, it was just kind of automatic. You'd have your tonsils out.

SB: Did you have yours out?

RMM: Oh yeah. And now, my daughter, who's thirty –

SB: No, they want you to keep them.

RMM: Yeah, now they don't even talk about it.

SB: I don't have mine out, so maybe it was a blessing that I had them, or maybe I would have come down with the polio. That's what I saw myself.

RMM: Now when they had these polio outbreaks, that was really a time of great fear for people?

SB: Nobody knew who was the next one who was gonna come down with it and die. Of course, this is before us, but they said that, at one time when it was at its worst, the hotel was turned into a hospital down there.

RMM: So, that was a lot of people down there.

SB: Thousands got it. It was quite a period.

RMM: A lot of that stuff, things have changed and whatnot. Like today –

BREAK IN AUDIO

AUDIO CONTINUES

SB: I taught when Communism was at its height in Newberry. We couldn't keep Upton Sinclair's book in the library.

RMM: *The Jungle*?

SB: What's the other one again, that talks against all our meat marketing.

RMM: *The Jungle*.

SB: *The Jungle*. The kids would steal it. There was a high Finnish population. You know, don't you? You've had this in your studies, that all around here there were spots of Finnish who Communist, like in Rock, and so forth. Anyway, it sure was in Newberry. I've gotta tell you this before you go, too. One Sunday, we had to come home for the weekend. We were on our way back, on that thirty mile (unclear word) stretch. There were all kinds of people on the road walking, and at the head of it was a red limousine. The head guy of the Communists. They were the woodworkers of Munising, and they were gonna walk to Newberry and try to make the woodworkers of Newberry come out on [a] sympathetic strike. Newberry had the big steel plant, and your –

RMM: Didn't they have a chemical plant?

SB: Yeah. In fact, some of the chemicals of Newberry went to help make the atomic bomb. I know that. But, can you imagine walking from Munising to Newberry. Well, that's not half of it. This is Sunday, now. They got to Munising, or, to Newberry, and they slipped in the Finn hall. They had a lodge of their own. The Finnish family ran the Finnish coop on their side of town, and so they lived in the upstairs of the Finnish hall. You can imagine how scared they were. Well, these birds have breakfast. By that time, the young guys of Newberry who weren't Finnish were sick of this. They put pieces of lead pipes inside of pieces of hoses. That's all the implements they had to fight them off. And they went after these guys and went after that place, and smashed it to smithereens. We had a hard time coming through the crowd that morning to get to school. Every kid in my class had a piece of the piano keys. [laughter]

RMM: So they went and tore up the hall?

SB: They tore it to pieces. And did that scare the Finns, though, who were Communists. A lot of them just scattered, left town. You didn't know where they were.

RMM: This was in the 1930s?

SB: Yeah. But to see that coming down the highway like that, you know, and then see all these young guys beating these Communists. One guy died, fell dead. They smashed the red limousine into smithereens. What an experience, though. We were kind of scared, in a way, because there was no way for us to get out of town. All we had for our protection was a night watchman and, being Lou's (?) county, the sheriff. We had no protection. So from the place where I was staying, I was going to call home to my mother to tell her that we were alright. But what I got on the phone was the superintendent of that steel factory in Newberry calling the National Guard of Detroit to please fly up and help us. That was an experience, though.

RMM: So that was in what, 1937, maybe '38?

SB: Probably right in there.

RMM: I know there was a lumber strike in Iron county, and I think Gogebic county, but I think it was all through the U.P., so you're filling in the blanks there.

SB: Yeah. Trout Lake, and Rock. One fellow who had gone all through school, high school and everything, in Rock. He was taken by his parents to Russia. Because he could also speak English, he was also kind of a prize to him. And they trained him. He had better conditions than the others, because they were gonna use him. And he did come back. He came back to Canada, and then, some way, got into the United States. This went on for several years. He finally was accosted in Wisconsin, and he had two choices. Either life imprisonment, or – what do you call this other, where you combat? What's the expression they use?

RMM: Plea bargain?

SB: You know, you're on the other What's the name?

RMM: A turncoat spy.

SB: Exactly. For the United States. So he was for years. Here, a kid from Rock, Michigan.

RMM: I've heard that story, and then it was in, I think I got a copy of it. It was in Reader's Digest.

SB: Oh, I saved that. Yes, it was in the Reader's Digest. I have it upstairs somewhere, I think. I had the experience with a student, a girl student. Her folks were from the Sioux, and Finns, too. The father got that into his brain. There was the father and mother, and then this girl, Margaret, and off they went to Russia. The father had it pretty good, because he was in the

Army, then, and an interpreter. But the mother and Margaret, after putting up with hardly any food, or clothes, or nothing, you know, they escaped to Finland. And, of course, this is during the Depression. The Finnish relatives of theirs in Newberry didn't have any money, hardly, to send them. But they gradually sent them little bits of money until they got enough fare to come back by ship, and so they came, not to the Sioux, but to their relatives in Newberry. So I had the little girl, by that time she was a freshman in high school. Smart little girl. And she was losing English. I had to keep teaching her the English instead of the Russian. I had her in a class play. It was the murder, "The Night of January 16th," it's called. Northern put it on once, and they used the courthouse. My school kids built the court scene themselves. I got twelve people from town to be the jury, the different types of people. Margaret was the one accused. And boy, my one kid that was the lawyer, he was just, what they can't do sometimes, if you make them. We went through the whole play. Nobody knows the outcome of that play, see. I didn't know if she'd be accused or she wouldn't. Out went the jury into a classroom. They were there an hour – would you believe it? – fighting. They said that, the next morning, there were pieces of paper all over the floor, where they had been voting. And then the audience – if we had only known we could have had some entertainment or something between – they sat and waited. When they came back they had her not guilty. And the very last play, where she says, "Gentlemen of the jury, I thank you." This little girl who'd been to Russia. My principal really liked that, and he told me it was the best high school play he'd ever seen.

RMM: And this you'd put on?

SB: Yeah. You have to be a dramatic teacher as well as a (unclear).

RMM: Whatever they need, especially when you're the newest person

SB: You had to do everything. I'd not only be tired from all day, then I'd have to go up for six weeks at night to practice. That was kind of interesting.

RMM: So you've kind of seen the whole thing, from the early days of Northern, and growing up in Ishpeming, and the Cornish background

SB: It's a wonder I'm still alive, don't you think?

RMM: And then all the way through.

SB: I don't know if they told you at Northern, but I'm doing a project with Boston University. Did you know about that?

RMM: No.

SB: It's called "The Signs of Longevity." I had to write all sorts of things. Go back to any family members or relatives and what they died from, and all this kind of thing. Not only that; the doctors call you and they're testing the speed of your reactions. The last call I had – you never know when they're gonna do it, you know – after they talked to me, I thought, "Well, I'll ask

them and see if I can find out anything about . . .” What they’re really testing is Alzheimer’s, I think. So I asked them if they had made any other progress, and he said, “This much they know.” So he told me that the people with Alzheimer’s develop a plaque, and they said it’s exactly the same as the plaque that develops on your teeth. Isn’t that something? The only thing is, they can’t get after your brain like that [like with] all that metal they use on your teeth. They’re gonna have to discover some clever drug that could dissolve that. But I got that information anyway, from Boston.

RMM: That’s sort of nice that you’re participating. There aren’t too many of you that do that.

(SB goes to fetch something)

SB: They sent me a birthday card. (Discussion about the card)

RMM: I think I was asking Deb about it, and she said that, I guess you were on that Smuckers program on the morning news last year? Where they announce your name?

SB: I didn’t know about. They told me about it, but I didn’t know about it.

RMM: It’s sort of interesting, because then, when you’re 101, which is also quite a –

SB: I think it’s kind of disgusting. I don’t want to be that old!

RMM: But you’re in wonderful shape.

SB: Anyway, the one time I fooled them when they called. I hate them to be testing me like that. So they’ll say something real fast: “Who’s the president?” So they did, and I said, “Bush.” And they said, “Who’s the vice president?” Instead of saying his name, I said, “He’s the silent one.” You should’ve heard him laugh. He said, “I’ve never heard an answer like that before in my life.” So anytime, I’ll get a call again, and I suppose they’re wondering how fast I’m gonna develop Alzheimer’s. I don’t think I will, do you?

RMM: I think at this point you won’t, no.

SB: I don’t think so.

RMM: When you’re going that way, if something’s gonna happen, it’s gonna happen at a certain time, and won’t happen after that.

SB: I don’t know if that’s heredity. Who knows if it’s your genes. But my father and mother both had their completely facility for thinking on their deathbed, even. Look at all the people now that are so much younger. Here’s Ruth Kell, for instance, who was head of the library before. She’s got it. Surrounded by the knowledge of the world.

RMM: And you would think that her mind would've been active.

SB: Wouldn't you think so, though? Your memory starts going. And I still don't think it's the same as what we used to call "old age." It's different, because they have different characteristics. A lot of these people, they want to go. Like some of these people have fled from the homes. The older people were more passive. They didn't do that. Is it like a new disease?

RMM: I think part of it is, you have a lot of people living a lot older. But what you're talking about, you're talking about people you knew who were older, that didn't have it. Probably what you're getting are so many people that are living older, that you see more of it, where in the past you had a small number.

SB: The action isn't the same. That's what makes me think there's something. Maybe there's some chemical that we're absorbing.

RMM: Well they've talked about aluminum, possibly, being a problem in some of these things.

SB: Yeah. Zinc. Even a loaf of bread is full of different kinds of chemicals, where before it was just flour and water and yeast. You can't answer it, you know. Anyway, I told them off when I said that the vice was the silent one. He got a kick out of it.

RMM: Well, I think that is very good for me.

SB: Usually I'm not the kind that does all this gabbing; I'm usually quieter. Look how I had to gab now.

RMM: I want to thank you for giving me your time and the privilege of interviewing you. This is wonderful. You're the first person that's – I've interviewed some miners up in Calumet in the 98, 99.

SB: I'm the first 100s one?

RMM: Yeah, 100 or over.

(What remains is more casual conversation, and thus not really necessary)

SB: That over, that really gets under my skin, you know?

RMM: I can see where you don't think about it. Like, I don't think I'm 62, and then somebody will say, "How old are you?" As you're looking out from yourself, you're still what you were in the past.

SB: You look nice and young for 62.

RMM: I think I've somehow – maybe it's the cold air outside or something.

SB: But haven't you seen a lot of people that are around 55 and 60? They're all wrinkled up, and they look like Methuselah.

RMM: My mom is 94 going on 95, and she had –

TAPE TWO, SIDE B ENDS