

Marie Sauer

11.8.97

Gwinn, Michigan

Start of Interview

(Interviewer) Probably every Sunday and I'll call you when it's going to start and when yours is going to be in. Now what is your birthday?

(Marie Sauer) September 12, 1906. I'm an old lady.

(I) My daughters is born September 22, 1996.

(M) Oh wow!

(I) And your name is Marie Sauer? Sauer?

(M) Sauer mmhm.

(I) And what are your parents' names?

(M) Lehman. Mr. and Mrs. Jon Lehman.

(I) Lahman?

(M) L E gosh I don't even know how to spell my own name!

(I) Lehman. Jon

(M) Pardon?

(I) J O N?

(M) Yes.

(I) And what was your mother's name?

(M) Ida.

(I) Oh Ida that used to be a popular name.

(M) Which is really my name Ida Marie but everybody didn't call me that because there was too man Idas in the family. So you don't need to put that all down.

(I) Did that used to be a common thing?

(M) I don't know but it was my, a couple aunts had Ida and maybe grandma had Ida but I don't know. Most of those folks came from Sweden.

(I) They were first generation in this country?

(M) Yeah. They were just children when they came over here it was during economic reasons I mean leave to work! And there were other people other families from the same area where they lived that come to this area and he worked in the mines and then that's what my grandfather first did. They came up around Ishpeming is where they settled.

(I) Do you know about when they came?

(M) I don't remember. I can look but I don't think it matters -- I have so much junk because I lived here for so long and I keep accumulating stuff some memories and stuff my family had three brothers and two sisters so there was six kids and by the time they all grow up and leave some of their stuff here and then they all went to school or went to school then got married and so on. So I mean you aren't going to find anything there should be a place where that would be.

(I) Probably be in the 1880s or 1890s.

(M) It be in my 1880s especially I think they might find but anyway the 1880s or 90s are gone. You can sort the out what's that the 18th century or 19th century?

(I) I always get confused by that.

(M) Yeah but anyways the end of the, they were married she liked the -- they were six and my brother born in 1904 and at that time my father was marshal Lynch he had worked in the mines when he was a boy but every time he worked himself up but he was higher rank than marshal Lych in Ishpeming.

(I) When did he got to work? Do you know how old he was when he went to work in the mines?

(M) No.

(I) Because we didn't have child labor laws until about 1915 I think.

(M) I know one of the stories they told was that they were in Sweden when they talked about the hard times they had. He said that his mother and the youngest brother or sister, anyway the children would go down into the mine with the mother and pick up the ore that the father had chipped away at and then they sent it up in a bucket. So really that was the reason that they came to this country was to do make a better living.

(I) You said you came to Gwinn pretty early in your life?

(M) Pardon?

(I) You said you come to Gwinn pretty in your life?

(M) Well let's see I when did we move it was 1913.

(I) Why did your parents move here?

(M) Because my father as I said had been a marshal in Ishpeming and he was very successful there so then he was elected sheriff of Marquette County, of course then we had to move to Marquette. So I went to kindergarten in Ishpeming but first grade in Marquette. It's not the

Fisher school anymore but the building is still there because I really see the sheriff hall rebuilt in the front of the jail in that case. I know of course you can walk from there to the school, the Fisher school.

(I) Where is the Fisher school? If I were to drive past that building where would I go?

(M) Let's see now, Third avenue comes right up in front of the court house isn't that about a block over up at... let's see now if I can think about it just right, up at the Villagers Burger up the hill a little bit the court house here and up here is a church and the church is still there! Cause my brother slid on the concrete sides of the steps he wanted to see my new toy first. But anyways it's about block over from that and its some kind of a school or something, it's still, the building is there it's been not renovated but it's been kept in very good condition. It's a good size building I bet if you think about all the buildings what it's called now I don't know, I don't think it's Fisher school no more.

(I) You said you had two brothers and three sisters?

(M) I have three brothers and two sisters.

(I) What position are you in the family?

(M) I'm the oldest girl, well I was the second child. Yeah.

(I) What was that like to live the in front of the jail like that?

(M) Well you didn't even know it because your house was in front of it and you had a nice living room and all the stuff and then you had your bedrooms upstairs, the only connection you had really was the cook who cooked for the prisoners was also our cook. It was garden near our part of the kitchen, you know as a kid you don't remember that much but what I do remember is in the pantry there was a sliding, there was a little sliding door under the shelf. Cause she cooked for the prisoners and of course they weren't very many at any time they were usually kept there for just a little bit and then shipped out to a real prison or some place. But I can remember watching some of them were allowed to go out around in the lawn and so on but they would have one of those steal heavy balls on their ankle, I can remember it was a friend of mine and I were watching this guy who picked up the chain and the picked up the ball and went running! We didn't even go in and tell anybody because we must have been talking about it I suppose later that night or something and we said oh yeah we saw him go you know. But oh she was a neat lady she was a big and fat Greta her name was, she must have been Swedish but she would give us stuff when that and one thing we had you know how there is trenary toast but they weren't trenary toast they were cheaper brand than that. They used to get them in a barrel and that was part of I suppose that the prisoners got that sometimes instead of bread I don't know but I can remember her fixing after the plates and passing them through that thing. We had to get, we weren't allowed to stay in any she was having that open but we would go and visit her in the kitchen which of course we would. Give here company, but that was our only connection really with the prisoners was that if you went in there and you could see them through in that little door, except if they were out in the yard which was very not too often because they weren't kept there ever that long.

(I) Was the house a separate house or was it connected?

(M) It was all one building yeah. They were all in the back, so we didn't even realize that it was, maybe it wasn't even all in one building but it sure looked like it but the one connection I know of is that little door where you feed the prisoners.

(I) So your mother didn't have to cook because this lady did?

(M) No.

(I) Ok.

(M) No mother had nothing to do with that part of it except I suppose dad must of had to wash the dishes there I don't know but grandpa Saari and sorry because he didn't stay long anyway but my brother was told to get out of kitchen out of the home we called it home because it was in front of the...and the accommodations were as I remember were nice you know for the family and that I don't know now if they'd gosh I don't know if you can live there now or not if you become the sheriff.

(I) What street was that on?

(M) On Fair. It was right in the...you know how the court house would be right here and then this building makes to it and then right here was right there was the house and the entrance to the front door was right of fourth street right on Fair avenue.

(I) Did your friends kind of think that was exotic cause you lived there?

(M) I don't think they even thought of it I mean we were that young you know? We just...so I don't think they paid any attention and we went with kids who lived on the next street Lumpion and that's the first contact I ever had with, there was a little colored boy whose father was worked on the railroad and they lived in that facility, Jimmy was his name. So we played with him, he was a nice little boy and then there was two older boys who lived in the back some place and their father later became sheriff too he worked in Gwinn I should think of their names because we played. I mean all in that one area it was fun.

(I) How did you end up coming to Gwinn then?

(M) Well you know you had a certain when you are elected office there is a certain length of time so when my father's term was going to be over he expected to go back to Ishpeming and they expected him to cause in the mean time when it was just the end of his term they went up to Ishpeming and bought a lot and had a house built and my father never lived in that house because at the time that they had the boys he moved us up there but in the meantime he had been offered a job in Gwinn. He worked for the mining company and for the township so he was the Marshall of Gwinn but his salary came from both of the mining company was CCI and Forsyth Townships. So we lived in Ispeming my mother and boys and I a half a year or so because I started first grade there at the Bridge Street School and now it's an apartment down there. But I went to school there and then in 1932 but my father like I said never lived there, he came down here and lived in a little boater houses up in -- . I still remember my mother saying ---. [Laughs]

you know being there by yourself with kids although she wasn't lonesome because both her family and my father's family still lived in Ishpeming and she had lots of friends that she had when she had growing up you know so that was... so when he got the job in Gwinn they came down here and started looking for a house. The one down the street here in fact I know it was the last house just before the woods and that was it, it was a really nice house but then my mother found out that it had been stuck with lightning twice.

(I) No way!

(M) She didn't want to live in that house plus it was too close to the woods and of course at that time it just gravel roads and no sidewalks and one little street light in the middle of the road so she wasn't she didn't think much of Gwinn. So then they so then bought this lots and had this house built and she still didn't like it because she always thought the school should have been over here where the hospital is instead of where you had to cross the road in order to get to school and that really scared here she was so really nervous about that. But you know never did anybody drown there one little girl did but it had nothing to do with the school or anything. The family lived in one of the houses down there and the brother took the little girl in his wagon down to the, I suppose to show he the river or something I don't know but anyway she fell in and the bar that its in I can't remember the name and his shop in the corner must have heard the little boy hollering or something and he went out there and he got her but she was already drowned. Which was awful just think mid-November at the time he didn't realize how bad it was I mean he realize his sister was gone but having to live with that that the only one of all the hundreds of kids that had gone across the ice and all things they have done you know at that river. And at time in spring when it's real high it would be dangerous but that's the only casualty there ever was as far as kid. There was a woman we drowned herself but that had nothing to do with school or nothing to do with really know...

(I) What's the river called?

(M) Escanaba I don't know which branch it is but it's the Escanaba it's the branch of the Escanaba River.

(I) How did you get across the river?

(M) There was a bridge yeah except in the winter when it froze and then lots of kids would take a shortcut but oh we'll be on to you if you got caught going because that was no both the school and your parents told you don't got on the ice. There was... well they made a canal to get the river away from the mine that's down in there, they made it though got a certain, a different way and that, then the part that they dropped off of course would freeze. We would always call that the dead river, you were allowed to go skating there when it got, you had to go over the railroad track and go to the end of town and go over the railroad tracks and then go down but at least it was still water. It was almost like a pound it wasn't, if it was the river it would have been blocked off. And now we were going to have a new rink for the kids which is wonderful right there down in the park now they got the building up that's going to be the warming place because when we grew up we learned to skate on the tennis court at the back of the clubhouse.

(I) Oh wow!

(M) They flooded that and they kept that flooded and we could go into the club to put our skates and then walk out and go skating. And then there were a couple other places they made skating rink and they would have a little shack that you can go into and change your skates. But the last two years it's been on the other side of highway down past by the school across the highway and that was, people didn't like that because the children were too far away from everything and in order to get there you had to cross the highway and then go. So they talked a lot about having a place closer so this is going to be nice, while the parents are doing errands or going to the library or the post office or something the kids can go and skate. And its close enough, it's in town I mean it's in the corner of the park but that's the project for this year and it really is a good one here in Gwinn.

(I) When you had to cross the river to go to school when it was frozen you still went over the bridge? That's where you supposed to?

(M) Oh yeah that going, I don't know have you seen the pictures of the school where you look through from downtown and you and see that school, it was a beautiful school. You can see that school and in the picture one part of the room right where that open space is a little slow going but it wouldn't freeze.

[Marie gets up to get the picture]

(M) This is the picture. I don't know in this one you can find...

(I) Lots of tears shed when the school came down?

(M) What?

(I) Lots of tears?

(M) Oh yeah it was a beautiful, but it was old it was built, you know it had been built in...I went there in 1913 when we came to Gwinn. I started there and the first the 50th anniversary 1906 oh wait... this is some of school up post them it's in one of these interestingly under the school to keep the cows out of the school yard they had, it was all fenced in with all the barbed wire fencing and we even had bushes so that the cows can be maintained and they were thorn apple bushes with big thorns on them but anyway they had this is a new - that was. But they had these spikes. That was what city hall looked like.

(I) Wow its beautiful!

(M) It was it was a lovely building, I graduated in 1913, no 1923 what I'm looking for is the picture...

(I) Have you always been interested in history? I mean there aren't that many people...?

(M) Oh interested in history! Oh always yes!! Well of course when you, see I graduated from the new school here and then my mother got sick and died so I started at Northern but I came back and I stayed until she got my next sister got old enough and then she was going to take a turn at

staying at home and so I went to school. I was going to go to Northern and I don't know why I got talking to it with a friend of mine who was a a PhyEd teacher which is what I wanted to go into, I was PhyEd, English and history [Laughs] crazy minors! But anyways I went to school in Ypsi and when I got to...

(I) Is that Ypsilanti?

(M) Mmhm yeah Eastern. And then I got a job in Newberry teaching PhyEd it was all PhyEd but then I lost my job there because there I was there for two years and along comes, everybody's losing their jobs because they cutting out PhyEd, cutting down on everything and hiring local teachers instead of the ones from out of town so I lost my job there but then I came back to Gwinn and at that time you could not if you were a Gwinn graduate or a Gwinn native you couldn't, you had to teach someplace else for a couple years before the superintendent would let you. Evidently he had some trouble with home teachers or something and so I well I was really upset because here you are you don't have a job, but that was alright my dream my father said you really should stay here or go back to Marquette so anyway several Gwinn kids were graduating from Northern that year and they all needed jobs so fortunately my father was on the school board too so he came home and he told me well they said they changed their policy and they are going to hire some local students who are gradating this year. There were, I don't know did you know Mr. Zesy? No not Zesy but...Rico Zesy who and Rico and there were let's see three that graduated and one that had graduated before but had graduated from Gwinn High School like I did. But he had taught someplace else too so there were five Gwinn people that wanted a job and they were going to take all of us so my father said well if they are taking those just out of school get your application in there and so I taught girls PhyEd and seventh grade history. And that's how I got in Gwinn. And then I got married and worked a while and then my husband was sick so I needed a job so I went back again and with a kind of diploma or that I had gotten it was a life certificate so you could teach at any grade you no longer so particular but you had to have secondary and so on. And so that kind of saved the day for me because then I could, I taught two classes in seventh grade history and had a homeroom and we went to the club for our classes. And walked up there from the room down here up to the building up there.

(I) For the physical education classes?

(M) Mmhm yeah.

(I) How long of a walk was that?

(M) Well it's let's see you follow the short cuts I suppose well it be, you'd have to get across the river and then there would be a block there and two, three four, six. Well six or seven blocks out here. Then you got to the club and you had to change your cloths and it used to take them twenty minutes from the time they left the school till they got up in the gym and it worked out fine. It was nice for me because I had two classes in the afternoon but then I went home for lunch from the clubhouse which is down at the end of the street here and had my lunch and went back to school from there so... and then when the base came and Gwinn really grew they were shifting people around and by that time I had taught in some of the grades and when they wrote to build the school by that time I was teaching kindergarten and loved it! And so anyways I could have

gone someplace else I could have gone back to all gym, teaching all gym but I would have to go to out to all the base schools and I would have gone into the high school and go into other school and that sounded like kind of a dumb thing to do because this way I could walk to school. Just from here to the Gibert School is just up the main street here. Really three blocks and a nice new school and I liked where it was and everything so the superintendent came and asked me if I wanted to go, he said I see on your file that you were in PhyEd you want to go back to that? And I said no I think I just want to stay where I am, so I was in Kindergarten for thirteen years! [Laughs] My kid always told me that the only place I knew more than the kids! I had a girl and a boy, yeah my daughter is married now and has now come back and they live, her husband is the barber in town so they live across the street. My son is married and some of those good looking kids that we made live in Green Bay.

(I) Oh so they are both pretty... she's very close and Green Bay is a reasonable distance...

(M) Oh yeah yeah! We are very close with them, the two family's I don't even know if Susan now that our granddaughter has gone down and they live in Kentucky. It isn't too bad to go from Kentucky up to Green Bay and so we get together for holidays, really a neat arrangement for all of us because we all like to get together and we all same kinds of socialable people!

(I) What's your daughter's name?

(M) The one that lives here in Gwinn is Kay.

(I) Kay?

(M) Yes.

(I) And what's your son's name?

(M) Robert. But we always call him Rob.

(I) And he's in Green Bay?

(M) Mmhm

(I) How many grandchildren do you have?

(M) Lets see I have three in Gwinn, three – have three kids and Robert also has three kids and then I have three great grandchildren the ones that in Germany. Nice little ones now. Oh gosh I have to take you to out to kitchen and show you my pictures of them. But anyway we have always been a close family.

(I) How did you decide, ok you went to Ypsilanti and you got a life time teaching certificate, with physical education major and English and history were the minors.

(M) Yeah!

(I) How did you deice that's what you wanted to do to be a teacher and then that you wanted to teach physical education.

(M) Because of this group of gals who all were ED and we were friends when we were in high school and some of them went away to school, and some of them moved away and so on. But this one went to Ypsi and she was into PhyEd now I was really more into the English and history than I was into the PhyEd but I liked sports I took part in all kinds of things and but I never worked at it hard enough that I wanted to be real good in sports or anything. But so when I went down there why I did that was it was, that's what she did she was PhyEd with a degree and she hadn't been the kind of getting in all kinds of all kinds of teams and things but it was something about that I think the activity that got her interested and she got me interested. When I went there everybody nearly died laughing when I was a major of English and history and you were in the PhyEd department! They didn't seem to go together but English and history I had always really liked and I thoroughly enjoyed teaching seventh grade history. Because it was American history and in each school I liked that too, the only thing that I never wanted, I was asked to teach first grade in fact that right in the beginning and I said no I couldn't do that. Well why not? I said I never been taught how to teach children how to read. And I said that would really bother me, I said the math I could do and the story telling, the singing and the playing and everything but I said learning to read I would just be, never had any training in that and I just couldn't see myself doing that. And so that's why I got kindergarten instead well then they began and here we are in a grid system. They were very interested of course it depended on a certain plans but they were very interested in further education in what you were doing! They used to have a lot of get-togethers of the teachers that taught the early elementary and they would have people from Northern come down and work with you or help you or orient you into the way you should be doing for little kids. Even to that I think you never got into the modern math, because that was all that's what they tried to put that in. That was the year all they'd teach you how to do long division and all kinds of stuff, well I just didn't go because I remember we got a workbook but they got together and just dropped it. Well anyways that's the reason I got into kindergarten instead of first, and then the gal who was going to have first grade cause it was just me have to teach kindergarten she really didn't want that, so somebody had a luncheon or somebody was leaving to get married and how you get to talking and this gal said oh I can't see myself in kindergarten she really wanted to teach my way well what would you think about first grade, oh well she said that wouldn't be so bad. I said well what about the beginning reading or the beginning math, oh she said I wouldn't be afraid of that. So the two of us went in to the superintendent and talked to him and asked him if he'd mind I said I'd be more than happy to take kindergarten, I said I raised two little kids I said I think I can do that and be justice to the children but I couldn't do first grade because you got to know how to do that. Well he said it is fine with me if it's ok with you so that how I got there. And then when I could have change and gone back to PhyEd but no way was I going back to PhyEd after that I loved Kindergarten. We had two classes of the young bunch in the morning and one bunch in the afternoon. It was hard in a way but I liked it so it was because that's the only place where you know more than the kids that's why you liked it so much. [Laughs] Cause of course your own kids never stayed very young but I did I just loved it and to this day I feel happy about it and I hope it doesn't sound like bragging but I got people who come that are grown up here, a guy with a great big beard you know and here he is standing up here and he'll say something about it. Now I don't know who he is from Adam but he remembers me and it's such a nice feeling because you did something right

evidently and we all need that! But I really did love it and I wouldn't have quit then but my husband got sick and he at the time had a very good job at the base and so on but we decided to retire, and of course then we retried because there was a need going on. But then after he died I went to subbing and went mostly to the Gilbert school but it was a life saver than too. I really hate saying it, I had a couple friends once from Negaunee and they used to talk about how they hated to get up in the morning to go to school, well I thought that was terrible they had a job that you hated. And I've always said I told my own kids don't ever do something that you can't stand to get up in the morning and go to it because that's nothing not worth. Sure lots of times you are tired and you'd like to sleep a little later but as far as the job itself is concerned never want to go. And I still like to be involved, go to the class a lot different classes and talk about Gwinn and last year we even went PTA night, remember that PTA and took care of kids! Some of us from our senior citizen group but so if you like kids, it's a wonderful job.

(I) You are wonderful sometimes you interview people and you can hardly get them to say anything.

(M) I've always gotten along, I used to get in trouble for talking so much.

(I) That how women are. I think it's great.

(M) Well for one thing I think I like what I did. And I still like what I do because I'm still involved in senior citizen, stuff school, church stuff but then you won't get too old. I'm getting old nobody said I'll be 90 and running around Gwinn high school that's old.

(I) My whole life my favorite people had been 50 years older than I am.

(M) What?

(I) My whole life my favorite people had been 50 years older than I am. My favorite great uncle is 86.

(M) Oh we used to have some grand uncles come up for the summer for vacation. And they were the older ones were really neat. Play cards with you and you know, and some people don't like children at all and we got some of the senior citizen that wouldn't be caught dead going and taking care of those kids at PTA. Last year we did rotten ones because some of the kids that came should have never been there because they were too old. They should have been home, I mean they were too old to have to be taken care of, my mother went to a PTA meeting but she used to be one and there was a pair of twins oooo it -- one of the gals that came that were taking care of because her mother had a drinking problem but the two little boys were so awful you weren't little kids you never say them behave and then when we had to locate one of the gals that took care of them. So that's one they kind of call me their kind of a grandma. But kids know they are like dogs, they know if you like them and there is no question about it. Because some of them are really tough to...

(I) What years did you graduate from Eastern?

(M) I graduate there in 1931 on a three year certificate and then I went, it much later after I had been teaching here at Gwinn but two of the guys in the high school got a hold of me and said you

know you are crazy, if you would go and get a few more credits and get that third year, you'd get a big raise in your salary because you would have a degree instead of just a life certificate, as it was that life certificate you can teach forever, you could not let, in Michigan. So I went to summer school which was of course when everybody going home for the summer and then I went to a couple night classes and I think I took one correspondence, but anyway I graduated from Northern and that was a good thing. Because I came home from I was helping at play practice and these two guy that had been working on me to go and get that degree came up and said we have some good news for you just what we told you. They said we were at the school board meeting they found out you just got an 800 and something raise for a year. See it put me in a different bracket with just that degree! I remember I came home oh I was out till night my husband was sitting there reading the paper and I said you'll never guess what happened to me tonight and of course... I said I just got 800 dollar raise and ahhh he said nobody is worth that! Well I said well whatever it is I said I'm going to get it. Of course he was just harassing me but it was worth that to go.

(I) So when you graduated from, when you finished at Eastern you had a three year degree which was the life time teaching certificate?

(M) A life certificate and for my life time that was good in Michigan at that time now. Maybe they had changed it but I wasn't interested because but I went and got the degree and it was, because those guys got me and kept telling me you are silly not to go!

(I) So then when you graduated from Northern then what was that degree?

(M) That was a B.S. yeah.

(I) In education?

(M) Yeah.

(I) And did you do that in the 40s?

(M) I don't even know when it was, because it was a long time.

(I) So maybe more like in the 50s?

(M) Let's see oh god... I remember he um, one time I went to take a test and I couldn't find him and he people were babysitting and people were babysitter him but he had taken a nap and Rob and his friend take your naps too so when I went over the beginning I couldn't find them because they were all sleeping and they are going off to take a test to graduate from Northern. I still don't own this. But anyway.

(I) How did you... did you work the whole time when your children were little?

(M) No not until my husband got sick. And then they were for the most reasons yeah he was a conservation officer and he had a nervous breakdown or we just say we got sick so he couldn't work and we needed the money so I went back to work. Kay was in school and but then my daughter was in school first or second grade and Robert wasn't in school yet he was so I could go and find out.

(I) So you got to home with your kids when they were little?

(M) Oh yeah oh yeah I stayed home.

(I) How many years, do you know how many years total you taught? You said you taught kindergarten thirteen years and you taught two years in Newberry? What year did you retire?

(M) 68' because my husband was sick.

(M) 1917 I think that's when I got this last year this is like, and it was... Do you know Judith Caroloto? [Spelled phonetically] She's active in our historical society too and...

(I) Oh no I never got a hold of her but she was somebody I was trying to get a hold of she's um Judy Carloto isn't she Burt Boins [Spelled Phonetically] daughter?

(M) Yes!

(I) I know Burt Bonin's

(M) Yes yes. Well the one I was thinking of this is the one I got a year or so ago but I got another one this year at something else. There is a couple of us that keep going back to the school and to tell the kids about Gwinn and history and reading and stuff. And some of them don't want to go well does not more fun than that except for that usually the teachers have them write you a thank you and the best one I ever got was this kid, this boy said the best thing was that we took up his math period and he was so happy because he didn't have his problems done. So I mean that's why some kids, they like it because you take up some time. Went to another senior class though that I was alerted before I went that they were doing a unit on Gwinn and the teacher said this is going to be a senior class like you have never been to before. She said they don't care about anything she said they have to be here for this hour and that's all I'm there for and they aren't interesting in the class they won't be interested in you, they aren't interested in me but she said if you agree to come she said I'll be sitting there with you. And that was true I never seen a class like that, you go to sixth grade or fourth grade those kids are crawling all over especially when you take pictures of stuff that you, the way Gwinn looked then and the way you dressed then. We had a bobsled that a cousin of mine in Ishpeming had made and he was a young man when he made it oh it was a really a neat thing it was about I would think almost as long as this davenport it was on like two sleds. Oh on a good day if your hill was nice and hard you could really get a good ride in, lots of kids could ride on it. So we were allowed to oh my gosh we spent all the time on that sled but somebody got the idea of putting it on the back of a car and my brother happened to mention something about it to my father and he said I'll tell you one thing he said if that ever gets tied on the back of a car, it's the end of it. Well my brother was really really careful and didn't do it, so who ever barrowed it or took it or something because I'm sure my brother didn't do it cause he wouldn't have done it, did. Well somebody told my father and hey Joe you know what those kids in the neighborhood were doing with that big sled? And he asked about who's car it was and he said took it away mean while after found out. He said he happen to agree that you could be killed!

(I) Absolutely.

(M) If that rope broke and you were going down a hill and a car was coming behind you but oh boy that was fun. Now if ever my brother took that sled out and I could ride it. It was for pulling kids and taking turns and he you have to remember they were good sized kids like in junior high and in high school well you had to be because it weight. But what my father said was law and he wasn't a loud spoken person and he wasn't really we respected him for what he was and what he did that was the thing. Because otherwise he... he scolded my oldest brother because he and another friend got an oven friend's houses where in an old garage and taking a little stove out to, you know how kids make camps out in the woods? And he said something about taking that stove and my brother said no we didn't and he said did you ask permission and he told you could? No. Well then what do you think about that? Well of course it wasn't stealing because the kids whose family owned it was there! I mean that's the way they figured it but they hadn't asked permission, I can see my brother sitting there too he would take a crayon but he didn't he demanded of himself and that's what made him such a good cop. I mean the kids called him Jon Law and then he was because what he said he meant and that's the way you acted ok and then.

(I) What did you learn from your mother?

(M) Oh the kindest person you've ever met. Yeah she used to read to us every night we read all the little pepper books and all the little kernel books and for all of us at that time. Because my youngest brother was much younger than us but she believed in school and reading and all the things like that but she read books and everybody else could see yet all I got my basement full and up in the attic. Of kids stuff I'll give to the kids, but she was so kind oh there was a family across the street that was having really difficult time, the father didn't work very often and I can remember whoever it was asking my father who couldn't order a load of coal to have sent over there, she said Jon you know she said those people are half freezing and she said was. She was great with church we were good Lutherans but we couldn't go to the Lutheran church because it was Finnish! You know we wouldn't understand a thing so we went to the Methodists church, we decided the Methodist was just a block away. That didn't sit very well with the grandmas at least with, at least at first.

(I) At least you knew what was being said!

(M) Yes and they came and the minster used to come down from Ishpeming once a month and so on the train and get late afternoon and then have church in the evening and of course they would have kids a different one because it was a Methodist church. But like I said though it was where you were sending your kids otherwise all they do is fill up a seat! See but then when I got confirmed could you believe I took the train every Friday night we went up to Ishpeming, stayed at my grandma's, went to confirmation school on Saturday, came home on Saturday night. Did I hate that! I missed all the ballgames all the good stuff on weekends on that train going up there. But that was important and with my sister when she was old enough she and some people living across the street that had gone to the Lutheran church in Cadillac so they made arrangements for those kids and this one sister and that's where she went for confirmation. So I mean church meant a lot to those people and they expected us to.

(I) So your grandparents?

(M) Yeah.

(I) Yeah mother was a homemaker?

(M) Yes. Well she worked there when she, I think she work as a maid or so on and she was really young. But never maid or usher, my father had made enough money we had a hired girl and then after we got big enough so didn't need the hired girl we sort of live in women who can do the laundry. Until my mother finally moved to Marquette and when we asked she to get a new washer, and my mother would do it my mother would be paid to take it to the washing room and clean the clothes you know? So anyway I remember when it was Sunday, it was Sunday afternoon and my gosh she had washed and washed the clothes and then to find out how nice and clean they got and how easy it was well we ended up with electric washers. So then we didn't have to have the wash lady come. So I mean we were lucky because its five kids and so on I suppose with two jobs I mean being paid by two different township one and the mining company being the other he must have gotten a pretty good salary for what at that time.

(I) How old were you when your mother got the electric washer?

(M) Oh I suppose probably it was fifth or sixth grade probably because that was one of the new ones I know that she had up there and it looked like, it was a beautiful looking with copper, I used to know what name it was cause it was one of the first brands ever made. Because we had it was convenient in the basement got stationary chubs that were built in you know when the house was build and then there was a little stove down there that my father used to heat the water for boiling because you had to put the white stuff in the boiling room. Oh gosh what would he think of it?

(I) My mother said that they had to fill up, we grew up on a farm, my mother had to fill up a big wash tub.

(M) Yeah

(I) In order to take a bath.

(M) That's what my friends had to do. On Mondays their kitchen was taken over because it be the big boiler with the stuff and then the washer and then in the winter I guess it was just terrible because then they hung their stuff into the rooms. My folks used to hang it in the basement I remember hanging clothes. And this one bad apple came and she didn't think that was good enough could you believe that she had my father put ropes in the attic? In winter they would freeze up there but of course they would smell good when you hang something up and it freezes and then it dries and it had that nice fresh smell. I never could understand how my father would do that but I guess that was for his favorite sister he would do anything that she asked him. She would help to take care of the kids. Now you don't even have to iron a lot of stuff.

(I) Your mother must have been very young when she died?

(M) She was fifty no forty nine yeah she was young, she had cancer. And they went to Ann Arbor and they went all over oh gosh. When you are a kid it hits you certain ways but as you get older it does more to you but as they did we were lucky because we such a loveable father. He

told me, he taught me to cook for gosh sakes! He taught me everything there was to know he used to make me made, he never knew it, but when he told me what I could and couldn't do and here I am kicking house and here is this little boy two years old taking care of and so he would tell me who I should go with and who I shouldn't go with and what these kids were doing and that I shouldn't be with them. I thought oh my say, I got over it though and I apprenticed it what a wonderful father he was cause he was.

(I) You had a two year old brother to take of when you mother died? Oh how terrible!

(M) The only thing he remembered about her was that my father used to make the crust on the toast soft like we fix breakfast in the morning. Well I was his mother really. Yeah. And he was a real nice little boy so that made it a lot easier but my sisters helped too and my oldest brother was old enough to be gone to college so he wasn't home except for vacations.

(I) That must be really...because I've been so close to my older relatives I've been I've had so many people I loved die and it seems like it gets more difficult.

(M) It does.

(I) It must have been really hard for you when you turned the age your mother was.

(M) Yeah. Yeah.

(I) I had a friend who died when he was 31 and I'm 33 now and he was always older than I am.

(M) Yes

(I) Its very hard.

(M) My best friend of 30 years just died a year ago, this is her picture and I still, her house now has sold but people who are relatives of my father's father I know them real well. I can't go to that house, and she was sick for a couple years and so she I would keep her informed of things and then I would go someplace and she was supposed to do something I'd call and tell her. And then when we would drive together, I'd call her and tell so I'm just now and even once in a while now I get mixed up enough that I jee I'll have to remember Maryann that.

(I) Right.

(M) So I found that picture and I thought you know maybe it be better if I take that picture out and put it where I can see it so that's why. I just put that out about oh maybe a couple months ago.

(I) That was a good idea.

(M) I've had it. And we went to both start school we both were widowed at that time we both had kids some of the same age, her son was older than my kid but the girls were the same age. So we had lots in common, I was better off than she was financially and physically because having a house of your own and everything but at the same time we had lots of things in common and we both kind of liked the same things and at that time in the later years after we both retired, she taught English at the school here for years and became the librarian. But anyway we took a lot of

trips with the senior citizen group, Old Potters group we went everywhere, we rode a camel in Egypt and we got stuck in the fog outside of Italy. We were supposed to go to Venice and go in the canals but everything... we went to Hawaii we went every place together. You know and when you got somebody that you are close with that like that, we didn't agree on a lot of things one thing once she got on a bus and she would always go to sleep and then I'd sit riding and we had partners so you had somebody to talk but she'd miss a lot of it id harass her because she's miss a lot of the scenery. She'd said why didn't we go on the bus is meant for sleeping. But she took it all in good gracely and our kids were good friends so we got together for holidays and you know it was really neat just like it is when you got a good family. But I think it's better now that I put her picture here.

(I) I think that was a really good idea.

(M) Yeah. And of course now at the age I am now wooho you know the last couple months even right here in Gwinn more people have died or in the hospital or something. But I am fortunate because I got my health is pretty good for one thing and then I got a wonderful family across the street, she's got a wonderful brothers in town that uncle Charlie and uncle Paul were all coming and wash my windows last night but aunt Edna will let you pay for it which is the nicest part of all. Cause I don't like to go asking people to do stuff, my own kids I don't care because I can do some stuff for them but those guys will come and they do this right now and they were supposed to come here and clean up the yard. Well he got a paying job so he do that but anyway that's good but not too good friends who pick me up when especially when we moved here when we can't walk any place because you are going to fall. And they come with their car and I don't have a car anymore, they come with their car and take things on well you can do this and things and so on but it's not like being able to call you up and say are you going to such and such a meeting well then I'll pick you up. So that's one good thing about living in a small place and living here for a long time.

(I) Are you and your youngest brother still close?

(M) My youngest brother is the one that died first. The younger one that I took care of. And then my...

(I) Because you said you are relationship was really much more like mother and son then...?

(M) It was but it got to be like just good friends. He married, he was in the service and he married a girl from – she's a real nice gal and she's still living and so we are still close with her. She couldn't get over us she came up from – and she was here in the winter in all the snow and all this stuff but we all you know how you all just jell with these people? And so that was fun, and it still is. In fact I talked to her on the phone last Sunday and had a nice long conversation but anyway my youngest sister married and family and grandchildren and so on and she died. Well now the sister that is closest to me is in a oh it's kind of like a nursing home and she is good and bad. I mean she has days that are good but her family took real good care of her, her daughter and son in-law. She lived with them for years and they were fine but it finally got so that they had no life at all you know because they had like Ann said it was 24 hour care. For quite a while I hadn't heard anything from them and finally I called and ask if she was by herself.

I tried writing her a letter, now whether she is going to... trying to pick a thing is thinking ahead. The past is better for her than the present so I tried to think of that, my oldest brother has been dead for quite a few years, he was sick I mean all the that did, did we were ready for it but it happened. But then the other brother the youngest of the boys lives in San Francisco and he's been having lots of trouble with his eyes but he's got a real neat wife. So I mean things get along fine so when people are in a good situation and before he got so much trouble with his eyes they used to come home, come back to Gwinn and see of course we all come and she might like it here, used to come back every couple years. Several times I have gone out there and stayed but right now he is in a position that with his eyesight being so bad that it you really almost feel like a burden because and Mikey loves to go, well she still goes some but she loved to go down. And I used to go there before he was fine and he has his hobby, he's got video, he's a video operator who's into radio. He never took him in the army because they didn't want him to do it during the war, he would be gone for a long time and we didn't know where he was but he was never in a service uniform because if he got if he was captured he'd be an American soldier you know in the American service and they'd be much harsher with him then if he was just a common northern here. So anyway we have always been close, we are still close with him in fact. So really a close family all along way down now it's a little bit more difficult because people are... now we are starting with the younger generation.

(I) What year did you get married?

(M) 39'

(I) The year my mother was born.

(M) Right in this room.

(I) Oh really?

(M) Mhm we had my aunts who you go to the Methodist church now that I think of it but we out of deference to my aunt Sarah we had her minister because mine won't come down and conduct the service.

(I) So you had a Lutheran minister?

(M) Yes. [Laughs] well Walt was Methodist too really, he didn't think he was but when he got his birth certificate and his dad said its right here. He was Methodist so it made it better I was happy to have it, it didn't make any difference for him he wasn't the one who went to church.

(I) Did you get married here out of deference to her too instead of the church?

(M) Well it we would have had to go up to the church and my father was still living too and it was much easier so we hired some gals from Gwinn to make a nice dinner and they served them and everything and we had a nice wedding and music and Walt always working on conservation officer in Marquette so we had rented a small apartment in Marquette and after we got married we lived in town.

(I) And he worked as a conservation officer for the state?

(M) Mmhm I believe you can still work as a conservation officer he'd always promise aunt Sarah that we would come back here if he ever had a summer and we did. We came back and we lived here with my dad and now that I had, a couple chances to transfer someplace else but we talked about it and at that time it would have been hard on my dad to leave here as it was. And it was fine for us, it gave us a chance and we all got along fine it was just the three of us and Walt knew and we got along fine and plenty of room. We got our rent and everything free, my father bought the groceries he insisted on that that he'd buy all the food course then he had a cook and a wash lady and the whole thing too! For the three of us it was good until at that time my youngest brother was still going to college so he had a place to come home to, which was another thing. So I mean it all worked you know together and we got along fine with my father never any trouble and he never, I think sometimes he probably didn't he be more than we were but he never made any fuss about it stay here I'll leave. We were still married for gosh sakes! Oh you were late last night [Laughs] but that was fine we just laughed about it so basically it served as good life. But we were hard working and so everything. She was gosh she was --.

(I) That's all I do. You are one of the most interesting people I have interviewed and now I've interviewed a lot really of interesting people.

(M) Cause I've got I've belonged to other things too and right now I've been knitting but we are knitting at first I was so sad I couldn't do it, one of the rsvp senior volunteer... one thing... this is the only Christmas stuff I've got I started a box over there but anyway when they leave stuff for little babies that are born with their premies and then they or they are very very they're are so little that they don't know whether going to live or not. Well we had this project of the little ones and then all the little afghan to wrap them up and then they had some little mittens well I tried to do that was terrible thing to try and make. But they take a lots but anyway that's what I've been doing and then before that we were on something else but it's a good thing to keep yourself busy.

(I) It's important work.

(M) The first time I started I sat there and I started to cry because I thought oh this is beautiful that they would have a little trip like that and little things to wrap that baby in and it's a gift for me that you knitted and then to have for that baby. But then you realize that poor mother is without baby clothes but then I finally worked myself into the idea that maybe you're saying, because people are thinking of you, that maybe that helps the hurt a little bit. So now I started knitting again so now I watch the soaps and get mad at them cause they are so icky! So many rotten people in the soaps that they had funny. But we call each other and we laugh because some of our friends think we are nuts watching that stuff, we say well while we are doing that we are not talking about people. Well anyway it's funny what you do in your life.

(I) So it's for premature babies and babies but they don't know if they are going to make it or not?

(M) Mmhmm

(I) I remember when Jessica came out they put a hat on her right away because they need to say warm and it just looked so goofy it was like...

(M) Yeah that's right!

(I) This hat but it was kind of pointed or something!

(M) Yeah yeah well you can and some of them put a little knob but I don't put a little knob on it. You make it out of soft...

(I) Oh yeah it is wonderful.

(M) It's soft yarn. And I love the pink one but I don't have any pink one but it has to be the one. At Christmas time and then oh you should see the boxes of stuff toys. You won't believe now you near the end of November or the first part of December and bring, and everybody brings their stuff in and some of those people bring in the most beautiful sweaters for all different ages and then their the lap robes and then there is some shawls that they have for people that are in the nursing homes. I mean it really is just a good set up here for the people who are able to do it because you are doing something to help somebody but you are keeping your hands busy and then when you go up there and that Kathy is such a good likeable person that it's almost like you are doing it for her. I mean she makes it so it's important for that.

(I) And that's at the hospital?

(M) No she's the one that is head of RSVP.

(I) Oh ok.

(M) Yup. In Marquette.

(I) What other things are you involved in?

(M) Well I'm head of the old in historical museum. And the Iron Mixers is a senior citizen group.

(I) That's the Gwinn senior citizen group?

(M) Mmhmm Foryth Township.

(I) Yeah my husband is the archivist at the university and we like to come to the museum here sometime.

(M) Oh yeah you should its really, oh you got all wonderful people working there. I don't do much actual anymore going up there and working because of the event stuff but going places and talking about it or getting stuff together and I'm on the board and right stuff and all that kinds of stuff. Oh we got some talented people now, Luc Bate [Spelled phonetically] who was our principle is the president now and Steve Cereal [Spelled phonetically] was the president --. And they are all people with lots of capabilities and lots of energy and so on and stuff like that. You got, well Rick's father and mother and me and Marian and there were a few and they were going to have a big celebration here in Gwinn first time. We knew, they decided they should have a

museum some place so we had it in the high school library well it was sad everything was just lone and then they took it back. But if there was such a good reception in the town and everything about it that that's where it grew up that we should have a museum. So we're up, it's upstairs in the town hall, this year we now we went and had chairs and me and Thomas had a couple thousand paid to have somebody work up there for us and this last time we had this Charles who, from the base I don't know what his rank was but he was up there it was high, he is such a gentlemen and so, well he came and worked for us. Well now he is gone there is not, but we are still associated with him so there used to be another guy a little get together for the -- but I mean so many people with lots of talent have, Judy Perino [Spelled phonetically] there's another one who's been real influential and writing for the grass to give to guest and funding befitting and getting help. And now we have graduated to the point where we even have insurance as far as some of the things that we have got there. Some things, of course as you got so much stuff that's irreplaceable but that you can't help but they anything stolen of course lots of stuff is safety right here negatives of the pictures are irreplaceable. And Jack Deo [Spelled phonetically] has been a real help because he is so interested in.

(I) Is he the one who wrote that book? Somehow I know that name.

(M) Well he has that photo place upstairs of Donker's in Marquette and he goes around and takes pictures and then he is I can't say scrounger but I mean he is out and about sort of and he gets involved in people who are knowledgeable and worry he might find. Cause he got some old films of pictures that he found, a lot of peoples garages and out of barns you know so, he's that kind of a guy. He's been down here a couple times too, so he and I are good friends cause when I, I had a really good picture of my father when he was a young man and with a beautiful deer that he gotten and somebody had taken a picture of him sitting in the woods with that deer. So I took it up to him and had a picture made and framed for each of my family, cause they were in love it. And of course they did and we had the deer he had from that picture used to be right here, cause he had it mounted and it was a beautiful always got picked on because there was a little boy used to come and he looked here and then all of a sudden he came over with something in his hand and he'd go to the other side, he was looking for the...

(I) For the rest of the deer.

(M) For the rest of the deer yeah. And I mean you got so many people that are interested in what, you know in that but the only drawback is the long stairway to get up there. Lots of people don't do that which is a shame and now just last time they had an exhibit on the Italian heritage of the area. Oh people came up there to see and kids who were graduated and gone away and of course, because it had wedding pictures of the parents and the kids were little and everything. It was really outstanding! So now this one is going to be Christmas but then the next one is going to be Scandinavian and that I will hunt upstairs for. Because I got my mother and dads wedding picture and pictures of town that they came from in Sweden and oh all kinds and that kind of stuff. But oh we had one of the things that he took a picture of a wedding ring, the mother's wedding ring and oh was that boy ever exciting cause he came up and he going through all of it and we happen to be one that had been a good boy and still was and he turned it over showing it for everybody in town and but it is too bad its uphill, it keeps a lot of older people from being

able to get there. So far I make the climb as long as it's has a railing. It is a nice place and now we have insurance on it and they were looking to, see it's owned by the township and the township make give us permission to have it out there but there was nothing in writing. So we to use -- she was going to lease us there but she said oh if they decide they are going to take that building down if they had given us something like that then they got to help us replace it, so she said but there is nothing in writing and she got a hold of somebodies to help and of the media for main devotion and and give that to create a museum so I mean it's exciting to see. Things are getting more and more legal and then then we have of course French legend was Jim Hebo [Spelled phonetically] from the Marquette museum cause they took when they had this one now on crime, they had some of my father's pictures up there so of course he knew I had them and so did Steve so they said would you be willing to you know let us have some and I said well sure fine with me as long as we get them back. So they, then the little boy in Germany the one who is my great grandson the youngest one, his name is there is too many Jons in our side of our family, there is too many Jons in the Erickson side of the family but anyway the little boys name is Mathew but his is name is Jon Leman Erickson. So I got quite a few artifacts of my father's, his billy club and stuff you know that I got I got in the box and won't let that go. His father would like it now and the little boy would like it to play with he wouldn't get to play with. I thought Bruce wanted, see he never knew my father of course he knew of him and heard so much about him in the town cause every kid in town knew him and since I've been grown up and been looking at the museum I found out more stories about stuff that happened with him and what he did. But he was a - boy I burn my life to you!

(I) You've lived in this house almost your entire life then since it was built? Cause you said you and your husband lived in a Marquette apartment for a little while and then you came back here, and then you raised your children here.

(M) Yup, yup. So this going to him too.

(I) And then you are involved in a lot of extra things but you also go into the schools quite often and talk about Gwinn history?

(M) Mmhm. Well see there aren't many old people left! Well I always been in school and having been I was a scout leader, I'm still a girl scout. And I mean I kept all those ties you know, but on the whole life is really good.

(I) And do you attended the United Methodist Church here?

(M) Mmhm

(I) Is it just called Gwinn United Methodist?

(M) Mmhm.

(I) Now you said you retired I put a bunch of questions I wanted to ask later back here. You said you retired from teaching in 1968 but then you, after your husband died you went back to substitute teaching. How long did you do that?

(M) Well that's when I taught -- for thirteen years.

(I) Oh my I didn't realize that!

(M) Well I don't know if I did that, he died in 1969 very suddenly...

(I) And his name was?

(M) Walter.

(I) Walter.

(M) Yeah the doctors gave him hope but it was awful because it was too sudden but he was at that time he was of course married and she was going to have a baby and so she – at that time. And so she couldn't drive all back and forth but she had been a nurse and she's still a nurse to – that way that she told me that if she gotten -- --- and she said you know sure because Walt was a very interest in photography, he was interested in coin collecting, he loved to read and he really retirement he'd read when he retired. But on the other hand he loved to fish and he liked it so the some of the actives were very difficult for him. So that's they said, she said you know, she said his heart that was really bad, it wasn't just a little bad it was really bad so he'd be physically handicapped. Sure he had lots of things he could do sitting down and being quiet but she said you know she said that would get awfully tiring, and it it would get awfully tiring. So you have to be sensible and then I give Luc Bate my lawyer once told her you know I said maybe you think I was still here for you she could always get me to come to school and I said you know what that was the best thing that ever happened to me. She could call me in the morning give a little bit of time to change your clothes I could be after to go to a different school. And I said ok close the door, we left all out of this here and we were up there with those little kids and you went in with kids, you can't be sad. You can't! And we were always good friends with the little kids we would play recess with them they never could get over that I'd sit down and we'd have a play party and then they'd set the table with the play dishes. Oh I've done that with my own kids for gosh sakes! Well then school let out at 3:30 going home, you get this feeling when you open up the door that the house is empty, but then you always had to change your clothes and then there was usually something to do and you were pleasantly tired and you had things to think about so you didn't come home and sit here and think about yourself and how lonesome you were and how awful things were and because Kay was away at that time they lived - they'd come and get me I would go I'm not coming staying long but when I said I want to go will you take me home, and they would. And sometimes I'd stay a while and sometimes I wouldn't you get that feeling you had to go you had to go home but Bruce stayed and I told him that I said you know getting me out of that house everyday like that a sandwich in my purse and they'd buy a carton of milk and that was my lunch which was fine. But you'd be with people with the teachers you were talking so you had company. You came home and there was usually something you had to do and so at least by that time you were tired and you had other stuff to think about, otherwise you'd, you could make yourself go nuts.

(I) So you weren't working every day, you were working as a substitute and you were still working in the kindergarten?

(M) I worked in other classes but then finally I went into kindergarten and stayed there.

(I) So when did you retire for good? Really retire?

(M) I think I had done too many years.

End of interview