

Interview with Robert Monck
Location not given
June 2, 2009

START OF INTERVIEW

Josh McDowell (JMD): Josh McDowell interviewing Robert Monck, June 2nd 2009. Could you tell me where you were born?

Robert Monck (RM): Epoufette.

JMD: Epoufette? Where is that?

RM: Ah, it's 28 miles west of St. Ignace on US 10 it's a commercial fishing village.

JMD: And what year were you born?

RM: Thirty-four, it was forty below zero when I was born and I haven't got warm yet.

JMD: Can you tell me a little bit about your family life growing up and what your parents did?

RM: My dad moved up here, I should say he moved back up here during the depression. He was raised over on Neebish Island, on the St. Mary's River. He went to Detroit as a young man and got married. My mother was from England she came to this country when she was three years old. My dad got kicked out of school in 7th grade and despite of my college education when it came to just plain common sense, he was still a lot smarter than I am. Just 14 years old he and his brother went on strike and shut down a saw mill. They were doing a man's job but they were only getting, the men were getting two dollars a day, they were only getting 50 cents. He said, hey look we're working as hard as they are. They couldn't run the saw mill without him so they had to pay him. I had two older brothers, a younger brother that passed away, and he was just an infant. I attended Epoufette had a one room school, 8 grades plus the kindergarten, one teacher. They closed it in 1943 and they consolidated with a school in Rexton. And Rexton's only went to the tenth grade, so after I completed the tenth grade to finish high school I had to board up and go to St. Ignace, Sunday afternoon, come home on Friday night to finish my high school.

JMD: So you went to St. Ignace?

RM: St. Ignace. I graduated from La Salle high school.

JMD: Did you play any sports in high school?

RM: Yes, football, baseball, I went out for basketball and the coach asked me if I would like to be a manager because I couldn't hit the wall with a basketball. We only had six-man football in high school, so when I went to Northern it was quite a shock. I'd never seen 11-man football. I wanted to go to college, but my folks couldn't really afford to send me. The Korean War was on and most of my buddies were going into the service. My folks talked me into waiting. I was going to enlist, and they talked me

into waiting until the fall to help them out with their business. During the summer my high school coach asked me if I wanted to go to college. I said yeah. He said, "Well if you can play football and I can get you into the grant and aid program at Northern when it's started." When the program started we lived in the Barracks, we shared the cost of heating it and the lights. I don't think we even paid for the lights, I think we paid a dollar a month and shared the cost of the heat for the building. And then they got us, guaranteed us a job, so that way we could earn enough money, it's unbelievable. My whole four years of college, I don't think cost me as much as a semester of college does at college today, it's really sad. So many kids, the minds that we're wasting; they can't go because the cost of college is too damned expensive. The most important resource the country's got being wasted _____. It's nothing compared to the resources of the minds that we're wasting _____. I wasn't on record to play basketball in college either and coach told me one time as far as track goes, had to put stakes out to see if I was moving, but I wouldn't quit. There was a kid from Ironwood, Tiny Anglem, Tiny weighed 265 and he made Tiny and I one night in practice just run a little hurdle. It was a 220 of little hurdles. He never did it again because any hurdle Tiny didn't clear it was crushed and we were replacing a lot of hurdles, but no he wouldn't quit. And fortunately, at that time I don't think there was more than two or three players from out of the state. Almost all the players were from the Upper Peninsula. I have no idea what they're talking about pulling the track, you know six man football was a straight ahead football. The guys were great, patient with me, helped me out. The funny part is, it was my freshman year, was more of a gift that Coach made sure that I got into enough quarters, so that I could get a letter. Then they changed the rules, you no longer had the free substitution rules. The next two years I sat on the bench. And they finally on my senior year eased up, but my senior year I played both ways, the whole game – offense and defense. Of course our record shows it, we had a nine to nothing record that year. Some of the scores sounded more like a track meet and that.

JMD: What positions did you play and what sports did you play at Northern?

RM: At Northern football, I didn't play the backfield, but I played every position on the line, linebacker, offensive end, I played guard my freshman year, and then the next three years it was center offensive line.

JMD: Did you participate in track then too?

RM: Yeah I participated in track, I did the two mile run, wasn't fast enough for any of the dashes, wasn't big enough for, you know any of the, when I graduated college I was 170 pounds, it just wasn't big enough for the shot put or the disk throw. One of the things, I don't mean to sound like I'm boasting, even though I didn't play enough my junior or sophomore year to earn a letter, my junior year I was voted most valuable player. Not because of the play, but I drove them nuts. If you guys are going to help me out, you're going to have to work hard. No matter what the coach would ask for, try to play, he'd ask to get me up to tackle, I was there. You want a guard, I was there. You're going to have to work hard to keep me out of this thing. I think we might of did that because playing quarterback, I think it was just for a fun night. Get myself killed or get someone else killed if I screw up. Red Money was an exceptional person. His patience with a lot of the students any other coach nobody wasted that much time on, I don't know what it was. The small schools if you were freshman they didn't give you a chance. The things they would tell you, he kept yelling me, I playing guard and he was telling me to pull wider. I'd go up farther out and pass in. "Pull wider." So I dropped back, "Pull wider." First I was going behind the backfield going up the, "Pull wider." So I came out and took off and got all the way, got on the track and then I started up the field in track. George Demassi was the manager, "George, go get him he's

running away.” He never really did tell me. I thought okay, he’s just trying to get me to quit but I won’t, no.

JMD: So you kind of showed him up a little bit?

RM: No, I never thought I was showing up, just that I could be as bull-headed as he was. Both my high school coach and my, “You play hard, but you play clean. You don’t deliberately try to cripple somebody; you don’t put them out of the game. You hit hard.” There are coaches in high school and college too, that have no business coaching. One of the people I taught with that graduated from the Sault, he was telling me that his coach in High school, the guy who’s laying down there, if you have the chance, “Step on him, step on his arms, step on his back and turn, you know. A kid that I graduated from high school with went to school at Alma and his freshman year, he was so good, both his ankles were sprained he couldn’t practice all week because his ankles were so bad. They had to tape his ankles before game time shoot him full of Novocain so he could play. At half time when the Novocain wore off he’d shoot him up again. He got drafted he came back from service I don’t know how he managed to make it through the service because he tried to go back out for football when he got back. He couldn’t do it his ankles just couldn’t take, they were just ruined. The guy that he had coaching there took over the Northern’s. Red Money retired from coaching in fifty-six and Lloyd Eaton took over that fall. We had a no win record my senior year but the next year Eaton turned it around. I don’t think they lost a game. I can’t say they weren’t coaching dirty football but I think, the idea that winning it...

JMD: At all costs.

RM: That’s right. You’re just a slab of meat, now Money wasn’t that way. If you had a problem, you’re hurt, you don’t have play.

JMD: What year did you enter Northern?

RM: Fifty-two.

JMD: So was that the second year of the Grant and Aid program.

RM: That was the first year. I’ve said that I’m the only pure blood Barracks boy. I was the only one that was there at the beginning of it and stayed through. Some of them were juniors when the program started and they needed financial help but they were only there a couple years. Others started the same time I did as a freshman but in my junior year Spooner Hall opened and they had all the frostbite and so forth that they could stand. They moved into Spooner Hall, they didn’t stick it out all four years and then the following year, fifty-six, fifty-seven we had the grant and aid program and I think they tore down the Barracks and I don’t know if that’s when they started the Athletic Scholarship program. The Grant and Aid program was not a scholarship program. It was exactly as it says, Grant and Aid, you know they give you a job, you work, you could earn enough to pay for your... When I first moved into the barracks there were no provisions for us for dining. We would eat off the line in the cafeteria. Well a lot of us didn’t have that kind of money that we could eat, you know every day. After about a week, they could see how we were eating and that wouldn’t go and they made arrangements for us to eat with the girl’s dormitory. Because there was no men’s dormitory on the campus at the time. You want to see a shock? A bunch of girls, they didn’t know we were going to be coming in there to breakfast. These girls came down wearing rollers, without their makeup on and everything else and I was sitting there in the

dining room eating and they would scream, they would scream and run back upstairs... put their face on. So we ate over there in the girls' dorm, in Kaye Hall.

JMD: What jobs did you have at Northern for the Grant and Aid program?

RM: I worked in the cafeteria. And again, worked I think...they gave me a lot of extra hours, during basketball season I never played basketball so I had a lot of extra hours I could work in the cafeteria, so then my junior year I had keys, I would close up at night, weekends if they had a dance or something. I would get a lot of extra hours when the cafeteria itself closes around eight o'clock or something like this, so if there is a dance going on I could do my homework and study so forth down there until the dance ends at midnight and after they all left, lock up. My folks had to give me very little. Most of my support from my folks was new clothes in the fall. I had no idea I was going to go to college. I told my dad, "Dad, I got a chance to go to college." "What have you been doing with the money you earned all summer?" I said, "I spent it." "Did you have a good time?" I said, "Yeah." He said "Okay, I'll help you." You see, to him that's all money was for, was to have a good time. He never worried about the money, my mother worried about the money. They had a bar business and a gas station, restaurant. They served sandwiches and soup and this kind of thing _____. My dad was a professional boxer and he broke his hand in the seventh round fighting Lightweight Champion of France and at the time the depression hit there were thousands of guys out there who are good fighters and no one is going to spend any money to have an operation on his hand to fix it. The score cards had him ahead on all the score cards, but after he broke his one hand, they stopped the fight.

JMD: What were your classes or what was your major at Northern?

RM: Industrial arts education with a Phys Ed minor. I coached here some, taught shop, junior high, some remedial classes the last few years I taught remedial math class.

JMD: What was your experience like at Northern, being a Barrack's Boy, being one of the Barracks Boys, I should say?

RM: We were a family. They kind of looked out for you. At spring practice we had a new guy come in and I remember trying to impress the coach but he knocked me on my butt so for the next four or five plays, some of the older players made a point to go out of the way to make sure he got decked, he got the point. Hey, you know. We're not out here to hurt one another, this is practice, you get against a guy, you hold him, he knows he's out of the play. When I went to Northern, I took the greyhound bus, as we're up there by the prison and the bus driver, "Anyone going to college claim your luggage at Baraga?" So we pulled into Marquette at the Clifton Hotel, used to be the bus stop and I went and asked them "You said anyone going to college is supposed to claim their luggage at Baraga?" "Yeah," I said, "Oh okay, well claim my luggage in Baraga?" So were up by Champion and I'm saying, "I'm going to college in Marquette, why do I have to go all the way to Baraga to claim my?" "Well I meant the college in Houghton." I said, "Well there's a college in Marquette too." "Well I can't turn around." God if I don't have brains enough to know when to get off of the bus, what the hell am I doing? Then the first four people I met it was, Tiny Anglem who was 265 about 6'4", Bob St. Martin from Escanaba, he was only about 5'11" but he was 245. Bob was the fastest man on the team for about the first ten yards. Paul Baldwin was there only his freshman year then he transferred to the University of Michigan, Paul was about 6'4" and he was built like a brick out house and then there was Jerry Pangrazzi, Jerry wasn't any taller than I am, but Coach is carrying his suit cases, wow this guy must be really a big wheel the coach is carrying his suit cases for him. And then Jerry came up to me, "I used to kick the shit out of you." I said,

“Well you better pick favorite flavor because you might have to eat it.” I couldn’t believe I said that and oh man he just stomped his foot, I practically crapped my pants I was so scared. During about the first year I went back after about two weeks before school actually started and we were practicing three times a day and I was sitting in the Barracks after one of the practices and I’m all exhausted. I wake up everybody is laughing and there’s Tiny on his knees with a pale of warm water holding my hand in that warm water, “Pee Bob, Pee. Pee Bob.” Well I didn’t pee my pants when I woke up, and I couldn’t help but laugh either. Here’s this great big guy.(inaudible) I didn’t blow-up, they didn’t, that’s when they accepted me OK. It was just a joke. The Barracks, they were old CC Barracks that they moved in after the war, there was no housing for veterans. The way they were laid out there was one long hall way and off that hallway would be rooms and you could put two double deck bunks in it. Then a program started out that 24 of us and three had dropped out, quit, before school even started, so then come winter time hey we got to heat that whole other end of the barracks for just one guy and I said, “Well I’ll sleep in the hall, you guys keep this door to the outside closed.” Well some of these guys, they would listen to an all night radio station and they would go to sleep and I would go down the hall turning off all the radios and I opened up the door and I left the door open when I came out. Ted Feldman, “Corny close the door.” And Corny in his sleep gets up, closes the door, then realizes what he’s done, “Close your own damn door.” And I thought those two guys were going to come to blows in there or something stupid. We only had one guy that came in, it was my sophomore year. He had transferred from Michigan State, he was big and he tried to impress everybody. He would walk down the hall in the barracks like, and everybody would step aside for him. I’m not going to make a big issue of it, there wasn’t anyone afraid of him, so it was decided, that hey. Well, Dave Belger had enough of this baloney with this guy and he stopped, Dave didn’t step aside for him. He went to Dave, “Step aside.” “No you step aside.” So he made a move on Dave and Dave picked him up over his head and dropped him on the floor, there was no more problems, okay. Just little things all of them did. First night they gave me encouragement, you know to stick it out. Lou Miaska was outstanding football player. Just the little things – the encouragement. Bob Money probably gave me more encouragement than any. Bob didn’t play football but when I entered my preparation for college was not adequate, I could read, yes, but I wasn’t reading at a college level. So they had a remedial reading program for us, and some of the guys they hated it and this Tiny Anglem that I mentioned, Tiny was in advance sections of everything English, Math and everything else but he had to take remedial reading. He could read, he just wasn’t reading fast enough for a college level. But some of these other people would kid with us, “Hey the dummies are in the class.” And Bob Money would come up and say, “Don’t let it bother you.” He said, “I’ve seen a lot of guys go through here and had to take the remedial reading program and they have been very successful later on.” When I think about it, when I started college the teacher that I had in my kindergarten year had dropped out of teaching, to go back to college full time to get her college diploma. At the time, when she got of high school, at that time you would go to, it was called County Normal, or State Normal, you’d finish high school you’d go there for 6 weeks in the summer and you could teach and every year you had to keep doing this, we had a teacher here who taught for 25 years before she had credits enough to get her diploma and Northern would not accept all these years of teaching experience as practice teaching. She had to take off six weeks from her job here to do practice teaching at her teacher with the Sault, who only taught five years and this lady over at the Sault was so grateful to have someone with so much experience, she said, “No I’m the one who’s the student here, you know learning so much from you.” How these teachers managed, I think when they closed the school, I was just trying to come up before you got here, I think there were 13 kids in the school at that time, at one time there was a lot more than that.

JMD: In Newberry?

RM: At Epoufette. At the time they closed Epoufette school, there was only 13 kids there but take and divide the day- One of the things the things is a lot of the older kids did a lot of the teaching. Like the first graders, the fourth grader kids would go out in the cloak room and listen to the kids read, the spellings, they would practice and switch, the older kids did a lot of teaching. Kaye Water was head of the Industrial Arts Department and he'd claim that he could go into the library at Northern and he could sit there and he could tell you what kids came from a one room country school and kids that came from a great big high school, where there is different class rooms. When the library doors would open all these kids who had come from the bigger schools looked up to see, it was a distraction to them, because you went to the country school that was just a normal thing.

JMD: What was the rapport with the community between the athletes and, because I know you guys worked with the community, I think it was and you guys did like painting jobs and things like that for money, what did you guys do exactly?

RM: I never got too much involved that way, but one of the things that the faculty at Northern, there was a family, every professor knew all the students and they stopped and would talk, you know. When I graduated I had interviews for jobs and I remember I would go on, okay we'll give you two years credit on the seller schedule for military. I hadn't been in the military service yet. Oh why didn't you tell me? That as the end of the interview and I went through this three or four times and Ray Eulenger, I don't know if Ray was head of the music department, anyway he was in the music department at Northern and he asked me, "What are you going to do now that you're graduating?" I said, "I don't know, I have a problem getting a job, maybe I'll stay and get my masters degree." He said, "In what?" "Teaching." "He said, "Why? You don't know if you can teach, you don't know if you like to teach. I mean look at the number of people that we have on this staff that can't teach, you know. Why waste your time? You know get out there and teach a few years whether you like it." My first year teaching my kids put me through a lot of tests and there were a couple of teachers here that didn't make it that year, the kids drove them out. I was very fortunate to have Carl Parker, talk to any older person that are involved in sports at all, they all have heard of Carl Parker, they know Carl Parker. Carl, he won two state, consecutive state championships in basketball. Carl was quite the athlete in his own right. His stories, he could tell stories for days. Carl he graduated as a student thirty years ago, he would remember who you are, he'd remember who you married, he'd remember the names of your kids, but he took me under his wing the first year I taught school here.

JMD: Is that Newberry?

RM: Newberry, right. Bob, he said, "You're very strong and disciplined in your class right from the beginning," he said. "You can let up but if you go in and try and be a good guy and try to put the lid on, it won't work." My first superintendent told me, "If you're not in control in the classroom that means the kids are and if the kids are in control there can't be any learning." The first year teaching I had a kid challenge me, I didn't know it then but he had been in the reform school. He had challenged other teachers other years that taught in the hall with him and he challenged me and I had a gym class, I had about 50 kids in the class. You could feel it, every kid in the class was just saying "Hey who's going to be boss." To this day I know, God moves in mysterious ways. They had no locker rooms for the kids to change, so the old gymnasium, they could just change clothes up in the bleachers and this kid is yelling at me that if I don't get over there, to this day I can't remember and he stepped off the bottom of the bleachers onto the floor, I had him against the wall slapping his face and he's crying, "Don't slap me, Don't slap me and I said you remember who's boss." Well he was only a freshman and I got drafted that year into the service, so after two years in the service I come home and this kid is going to be a senior

and what's going to be his attitude? Is he going to want to challenge me again to see whether or not he's still up to it and I'm chaperoning a dance and he came up to me and I thought, oh here it comes, he says, "Mr. Monck you remember that day you straightened me out in gym class." I said, "Yeah." He said, "You know that's the best thing that ever happened." He said, "I never learned anything from it but you can ask any teacher in school, I have not been in trouble a day since." And the teachers say yeah, he hasn't been. Most kids really want you to be consistent with them and the worlds changed so much. In a way I was kind of bitter when I retired. I had thirty years and I could retire but I had a much smaller pension because I retired so early from teaching but the laws got up to the point where I don't know how teachers can teach today. The last year I taught I had a kid cussing in my class, cussing at a girl telling her what she could go do to herself and I slapped his face and kicked him out of the class and I had a teacher aid watch the class and I go explain to the principal why I sent him in and he's telling the principal that I slapped him. "Yes, I slapped him." I said, "If he uses that language in my class, I'll slap him again." You know, "Well you can't do that." I said, "Hey, how else can I have control over the class if they know they can get away with this kind of stuff." I think it has changed some but I know the first year that, that state law against corporal punishment came out it was ridiculous. Kids, little kids at the water fountain coming after recess, kids standing there holding everybody up, teacher took the kid by the wrist to pull them away from the faucet, because he wasn't going to drink he was just, Bingo, he got slapped with a law suit. "You have no reason to touch my kid." I had a parent the last year come up to me, a kid had thrown some stuff on the floor in the locker room. I said, "Pick it up." He said, "They threw it at me." I said, "I don't know who threw it at you, I saw you throwing it, you pick it up, or get out." He went, "I'm not getting out, I'm not picking up." So I shoved him out, well next day his dad came in, "You touch my kid I'll be back." "Well I'll be here if that's a threat." I said, "You're not doing your kid any favor. Look he can't get along in any of the other classes, he can't get along with classmates. He's in trouble on the bus." I said, "If it was just he and I we got a personality conflict but you're defending everything he does, you're not doing him any favors." So, I mean, it just wasn't fun anymore and ninety percent of the time they knew that if they messed up in my class, in shop class, there's no horsing around here. As soon as they get hurt in here, you shove somebody, somebody could hit the corner of a bench or into a machine, no way. They knew if they acted up they got the board of education. And after a few years....One kid said, "You know Mr. Monck you can't hit us hard enough to really hurt us, you wouldn't dare." All there doing this for is attention, and I said, "You know I think you're right." So I would send a letter home, if the situation demanded I might kick him out of the class right now, but I would send a letter home telling them what their kid had done and after the third time, hey you can't come back to class until your parents come in here and sit down and we can work something out in here that we can get along. Just about every case the kid would be back the next day apologizing, the parents would say, "Hey you go back and apologize here, you're goofing up." But, one kid can really make it miserable. One year it was the last period of the day, this kid is arguing with me and his buddies are egging him on, he can't back down, I can't back down and hey I'm being just as dumb as he is, we're yelling back forth. "Out in the hall." We're out in the hall, I says, "Larry you can't back down in front of your friends, I can't back down." I said, "I can't back down, if I back down I might just as well walk out." "Mr. Monck I'm sorry, I know I'm wrong." But, I'm still so damn mad and I was driving home that night after school and the school buses stop and I'm going right by it and I realized it and I stood on those brakes and fortunately the bus driver, he saw a car coming up so he just opened the door, the car was stopping, so I pulled over on the shoulder of the road and I went back to the bus driver and he was wild. I told him, "I'll call you tonight and I'll explain what happened." "It better be damn good, or I'll turn you in." One kid can just spoil the whole day and it's bitter for everyone else, so I decided it's time to quit I can't teach this way and I guess some of the rules have eased up some but I been retired for twenty three years now and I have a lot of kids, I have yet to have a kid come up mad at me or upset with me because I disciplined them in class.

JMD: What relationship did you have with Coach Money?

RM: Yea I had. Money is hard of hearing and most guys got in trouble with him. They would go in and he would get things screw up and they would end up in an argument. If I had to go in and see him, I spoke up good and loud, so I knew he understood exactly what I was talking about and all those years in teaching and summers I worked for the DNR running chainsaws and lawnmowers, so without my hearing aids I can't hear, so I can appreciate the problem. Funny thing happened, Jack Mischka had a boil on the back of his head, so those old helmets that we had, he'd put the helmet on backwards, it would work you know. Well Money would come out on the field, we're all warming up, "Mischka put your helmet on right." And he tried to explain to him why he had it on backwards. Money didn't hear a word. All he heard was it hurts. "No damn wonder it hurts, you got on it on backwards." You know, "Okay." Then he put it on right. No Mrs. Money tells the funniest story. Well Bob was the one that repeated the story, saying that his mother told him at the time that his dad had a mistress. And...Have you heard the story? And that's probably true. Because he would be over there at night you know, very few nights that he wasn't in his office working and as far as... I don't recall the Barracks Boy's ever going around the community and helping, some of the fraternities might have. Most of the kids in the Barracks Between study time and work time we didn't have a whole lot.

JMD: What did you do during basketball season? Did you just work in the cafeteria?

RM: I worked in the cafeteria, right, and well, he had a real big intramural program and if you weren't on the basketball team you were expected on the intramural team and we had to referee the games. He was always to be sure of that way, so he kept us involved and everything.

JMD: So you were on an intramural team?

RM: I refereed because all my friends were basketball players. You know, Red took over there, he took over right after World War II and Bob could probably tell you these more accurately than I can, but I know that some of the coaches that were veterans that I worked with afterwards that went through when Money was coaching. There were guys on that team, one of them were with Carson's Raiders during World War II. They were killing men with their bare hands and taking no prisoners, what they had been through with the combat and so forth and coming back, as far as training goes, fellows we can't smoke, we can't drink, all this kind of thing. You know, this guy's a laugh. All football was and stuff was an outlet for excess energy. I can't imagine trying to coach a bunch of guys after what they had been through, you know, it wasn't like a bunch of kids out of high school. These guys are all... most of them are at least twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six years old. The things they had been through and it's funny, I've seen pictures of McMahan while he was in college. When I met him he was a high school principal or superintendent, suit, dressed up, he looked like an executive of a bank. But, the pictures of him in college he still had his military fatigues on, his combat boots on, his guts hanging out, I couldn't even believe it's the same person you know. Some of the stories that some of these guys have told about these veterans is unbelievable. I bet Jerry Pangrazzi was a freshman, I may have the wrong man. But there are a couple of guys from the Sault, Bye Brothers, they were just huge, they weren't fat, they were big. They could go into those double bunks, they were at the right height, their arms were like a fork lift. They would pick a guy up and just turn around and drop them on the floor.

JMD: Were they part of the football program?

RM: They were ahead of me. They had graduated ahead of me. But the size and the ability of these people that we had and there were a lot of people that went through Northern at the time and I don't think they really had the respect for Red that he deserved. He took over the year this coaching record was better than a 500. Anything you coach for that many years and you got a 500, I think you've been a successful coach.

JMD: What year did you graduate?

RM: Fifty-six.

JMD: Fifty-six, so since you were the first and you stayed through the whole thing, did you get to watch it change? Was there much change from when you went there?

RM: Oh god, it changed at Northern. I don't know if I can say the athletic program changed tremendously, the recruitment not just in Michigan but throughout the whole country. Before I even graduated, I was still in college and this family friend of mine, my parents had coached for many years, and he advised me against going into coaching. He had coached for many years and for all the years he coached, most parts he had been a successful coach, but the last four or five years he had coached he had poor teams and they remember when you're winning, but they soon forget when you're losing. I can remember the Kingsford coach, they had burned him an effigy early in the season, but they played Iron Mountain which was their arch rival. They beat Iron Mountain said, "Hey, He's God." You can lose every game if you beat their arch rival, and just before we graduated my advisor, advised me against a Phys Ed minor. That's a hell of a time to tell me now. The problem that they run into is that if you have an industrial arts major and you're coaching, too many of the coaches let their shop go. They don't take care of the equipment. It's not kept maintained, it's not kept in safe condition because there is too much time spent in coaching and I had that accusation here, I didn't have that problem, I coached for a couple years and how it came down actually, is that the superintendent wanted this teacher, but the only way he would come here to teach was if he got a coaching job, so he took me out of coaching and gave it to him and when I went to ask him about it I said, "I understand I won't have the football coaching anymore?" He says, "No you, you know, your machinery." I said, "What machine are you talking about?" I said, "There's not a machine in my shop, that's not in better shape now than it was when I came here." I said, while I was in the service they built a new industrial arts wing and they had a dust collector system installed, but it wasn't hooked up properly, it didn't work. I had corrected it and it worked. A couple of the machines had no guards on them, I had to put guards on them and I could see how that happened. School gets out at three thirty, you got to be at the football field and by the time you got done with football practice and supper and you are turning papers in to correct, but I made a point to keep the shop equipment kept up.

JMD: Did you ever go back for a Masters?

RM: No, I never did. I took other classes. I got my permit teaching certificate. Greatest thing is, you know, that so many classes that are required for the Masters program, I could see where anything could improve my teaching skills. As far as money goes, I made more money working summers at the DNR, in fact I worked so many summers with them that I also get a pension from the state for working summers with them.

JMD: What year were you drafted into the service?

RM: '57.

JMD: What branch were you drafted in?

RM: Army.

JMD: What did you do in the Army?

RM: I ended up teaching school, I was sent to a parts supply specialist ordinance for 16 weeks. I arrived in Germany and they were getting ready for an inspector general inspection. They told me they had no day room, well the company commander looked at my record and saw shop teacher and said, "Okay you got to make us a day room." So, when we got the day room completed, we got a superior rating he said, "Okay you say here." In a half hour I could have a thing all cleaned up, nothing to do. So I finally went down to the commander and said, "Look," I said, "let me get out the warehouse, there's guys in sick hall limited duty, they can take care of the day room." So they let me get out the warehouse for about a week, go back up to the day room, everybody we put there goofs off. While I found out that the Army had a policy, if you had less than ten years and they called it a GT score, GE score whatever, but if it was less than 90 you couldn't reenlist, if you had over ten years and less than 90 you couldn't get a promotion, so I ended up teaching these guys. I found out that the teacher that they had was being rotated back to states. So, I got a chance to get in there and that was quite an experience too. Some of these guys that I had at seventeen years in the service, I stated with them a third grade level. One of the guys I had, he had helped capture that fort that I was stationed at in Germany World War II, he had been through the Korean war and he got frostbite in Korea and I thought to myself, he might not be able to read or write. If he can go through that much combat and all he get's is frostbite I'm going to be so close to him he's going to think I'm his shadow if the Russians start coming across the border. And it's surprising to note that especially with math was really amusing because if I asked about 25 percent of something, it meant nothing. I said, "What if I got 25 percent of a dollar, what is it?" "It's a quarter." "What's thirty percent of it?" "33 cents. Once I put a dollar in, if I tried to touch their pocket-book, no way I, am not going to fool them but you ask anything else and one of them I had was a Puerto Rican. I had him there for six weeks before I could understand him, his English was so bad. In fact, he wanted to reenlist and our company commander wouldn't let him reenlist because communication was such a problem. He gets back to the states, he gets a 1000 dollar bonus for reenlisting and they sent him right back to the same company and the company commander cried when saw that roster come in, "I got the guy back anyway." It seemed like such a shame. A lot of them that they go to this school, they didn't want to be there, they were in there for, they get their 20 years, like this Puerto Rican, he got his 20 years in he would retire go back to Puerto Rico and on his Army pension he would live like a king, you know with what the dollar is worth down there and a lot of these guys they were home front, they weren't going to benefit anything by it, they weren't going to do any better jobs. We had the main supply depot in Germany and there were a hundred thousand items. We didn't have computers then, they had IBM cards. Code cards with punchers and you would punch on the code number and this thing could sort through all the cards and kick out the cards with what warehouse it would be in and what aisle it would be in. These guys would look at the part and they knew where it was at, they didn't have to worry about the thing and they hated it. "Look. If you want to learn I'm here to help you. If you want to go to sleep I'm not going to say anything, it's up to you, but if an officer comes into an area, I'll ask you know stay awake just like you would expect me to if you were teaching a class." So I never had a problem...

JMD: Do you have anything else you would like to add about your experience at Northern or the Barracks Boys or...?

RM: You know the sad thing, it's nice to see Northern grow but there are other things that are sad, like I say. I felt very comfortable going to any professor to ask them for advice or help or anything as family. Kids that I had here in high school coaching that went to Northern, the one told me that the classes have become so large there. A friend of his from Munising had the same classes but different hours, they had both taken the test. They both had flunked the test in the class, so when the other one was supposed to go take the test, I know what's on the test now, I'll go back and take it, you go take the test again this time sign my name on it and I'll sign your name on the thing. God, there's that many kids in a class, that the instructor cannot recognize, hey there somebody who's here a second time, is kind of scary, in that way it's kind of sad to see it grow, but either you grow or you die. Northern had to do it.

JMD: I would like to thank you for your time.

RM: Thank you. Actually I don't know, anything you probably hadn't learned other than my name...One of the disappointing things was that the Dean of Women was a very nice lady but they would decorate the Foyer in Kaye hall put red lights in it and they would make the janitors take them all out. We would have a dance and she told the, Ivan Kibasek would often play music for the dances. She said, "If couples get dancing too close together, you stop playing the song, you know play something else." That's why Ivan had to play the most dreamy music he could, he couldn't get anything between them. A girl from Rapid River, I think freshman had to be in by 9:30 or by 9:00. She had one her friends set off the fire alarm so as a result she could sneak back in and she felt bad about what she had done, so she went and confessed about what she had done and "Hey you're out" they called her parents and after her parents come up and see what the hell is a matter, you know, you can't behave yourself. I couldn't believe it, this is a lady she is eighteen, nineteen years old. She knew what she did was wrong and yet you're treating her like this. Dean Bottum was a great guy but he could be that old that he couldn't remember when he was young too and what kids were doing, they weren't doing that wrong. Some of his favorite stories was about a guy outside the girls' dorm room kissing her good night with a cigarette in his hand and kiss her after a while and then he would take a couple drags on his cigarette and then he said, "One of those two was being neglected here, either the cigarette was or she was." You know, which I think was a....

END OF INTERVIEW