

Interview with Reverend Louis Cappel

January 29, 1997

Interviewer: Dr. Russell Magnaghi

Marquette, MI

RM: As an opening question, what is your birthday?

LC: December 16, 1919.

RM: Could you tell us a little about your background and origins?

LC: I was born and raised in the Copper Country, Baltic, MI. My parents were both from Italy. They both came over here as single young persons. They came over here and married. I was educated in the public schools in the Copper Country, Adams Township School District. The then famous Mr. and Mrs. Fred Jeffers, he was superintendent of the schools and she was principal of the high school. I tribute much of my education to their strictness and discipline in the process of learning. My dad was a miner. He had one sister and three brothers. We grew up in a humble home with a lot of love and faith. I think my vocation for priest was nursed in the home. I went to the seminary in...I didn't graduate from high school. I left after my junior year and I went to St. Lawrence Seminary. At that time it was St. Lawrence College in Fond du Lac, WI. It prepared me for the major seminary. I went there in 1937 and graduated from there in '41. I went to the major seminary in '41 and was ordained in '46.

RM: Was that at...

LC: I went to the St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee.

RM: Was that the seminary that was used for priests in the Upper Peninsula?

LC: At that time they were using St. Francis Seminary and also St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota. Occasionally students would go to Cincinnati, Josephina.

RM: But there wasn't anything in Detroit?

LC: In Detroit there was Sacred Heart Seminary. I think, if one has to go, he could go there. Usually we were assigned to Milwaukee or St. Paul.

RM: How did you get involved in the social projects and community projects?

LC: My priesthood, I was ordained in '46 and my first assignment was in St. John's in Ishpeming. Then I was there for 6 months and Bishop \_\_\_\_\_ asked me if I would go to St. Joseph's Hospital in Hancock to teach nursing ethics and also be Chaplain in the hospital. He was looking for someone closer to the books. So I was there for about a year and then I went to St. Ignacius. From there I went to St. Ann's in Escanaba as an assistant. From St. Ann's I went to St. Mary's in Wakefield. I was asked to go to

Ramsey in 1950 or '51. They asked if I would be the administrator for the Christ the King Parish in Ramsey. When I went to Ramsey there were 13 mines operating in iron ore. Really, that's where I got started. I tried to get industry in the UP. My parishioners were losing their jobs because the mines were closing. So I felt something had to be done. That's where I got the interest in the social interests, particularly for industry to come to the UP so that people could have jobs. What really got me is that the men were leaving the area to go to work in Kenosha for American Motors. American Motors during the '50s were hiring very much. If they went down there they could get jobs easily. But they didn't want to move down there. So they would commute. They'd leave early Sunday afternoon and go to Kenosha and come back on Saturdays to spend the day home with their families and then go back again. There was, the men were tough. If I could get a job around here I'd get a job. White Pine was opening up at that time too. Some men got jobs at White Pine, but not enough to pick up the slack from the mines closing in Gogebic. So I became involved in different organizations at that time. There was a UP development group. I always heard the story that if we were going to get things going up here we'd have to find natural gas. It was always talk, talk, talk. One day, a fellow that used to be here in Marquette, he used to be in the UP Development Group, his name was Bill Johnson. He got a job with some gas company in Oklahoma. He wrote me a letter and said if you want to get gas in the UP contact Northern Natural Gas in Omaha, Nebraska. So he gave me the name of the President of the company, Faust, I don't recall his first name. I wrote him a letter and copied the letter to every congressman in the mid-west. He told me he was impressed, not so much by the letter, but by the fact that I copied the letter to all the congressmen and senators in the mid-west.

Then he called me up and told me that Northern Natural was interested in coming to the UP. So he sent two men up to see me. The two men, was Doug Dunn and Herb Sampson. They flew in their private plane. I met them at the air port. I started talking to them. Being a priest I was wondering if there was a Catholic guy in this group to relate a little better. The two names Sampson and Dunn, I couldn't figure out which one. So we went out for dinner on Friday night. I was playing a guessing game. I picked Dunn because it was an Irish name. I took them to dinner. Sampson ordered the fish and Dunn ordered the steak. So come to find out Sampson was a graduate of the University of Notre Dame. Anyway, it became a friendship for the three of us. They told me they were interesting in coming and putting gas in the Upper Peninsula. They said the key to coming would be if Cleveland Cliffs would develop a low grade ore in the Marquette area. They would have to come from Canada through Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. So to get this low grade ore, we call it pelletized ore here, that would help their process. Help them in getting the gas. A group of legislators were coming through the UP discussing economics. I met with this group. A man named Jimmy Gillet was a lobbyist for the mining industry and traveling with them. They were having meetings about developing the UP and particularly the mining industry. That's when I first learned they were trying to get some bills passed in the state legislature to change the taxation of iron ore from the Findlay tax system that they used years ago, which they made an estimate of how much ore was underground and then they would tax it. They were trying to change that to tax it when it came to the surface. That became the lower tax ore bill. I got this explanation and Jacobetti was our state representative...or not state representative. Louis Mazano from Wakefield from the Gogebic area was representing

this area. And a fellow named Earison from Escanaba was representing this meeting. Jake wouldn't come to this meeting because he was totally opposed to changing the tax system. Gibby Wells was the other one. He represented the Iron River/Iron Mountain area. Gibby and Jake were strong union people and didn't believe in the tax break. So I started working on this issue. Minnesota was having a tax break, they called it taconite. They were changing their big mines into making taconite. The legislators...in Ramsey at that time we used to get the Duluth Paper. I knew more about the news in Minnesota than I did about Michigan unless I read it in the paper. There they had a bill go through the legislature that was changing the whole tax system for the iron ore industry in Minnesota which made them competitive. Our ore had a higher tax. So I went to many meeting downstate and paid out of my own pocket to fly down, trying to convince legislators that's the way to go. The bill was formed. Jake was not for it. In fact, Jake would argue with me. One time he threatened me, I'm going to tell the Bishop on you, you come down here and do all these things and you should be home taking care of your parish. I told him, Jake I'll tell you what if you want to make a fight with the Bishop, I'll make it for you. He opened up his eyes a little bit. But he was fighting it. Then Joe Mack was also a state representative. Louis Mazano lost out. Joe Mack was totally opposed to this. So when you have the three legislators in the UP, three democrats, I didn't see much chance of this going through. We kept working and trying to educate them. When the bill came up to vote, to make a long story short, Jake and Gibby Wells called me and said Father, we're going to vote for that bill. Gibby told me on the phone, we're going to vote for it, but I'm going to lose the election. People won't like that. You've been right and I see the future. Maybe he did lose the election. But they voted

for it and that's where we get the low grade ore from. When that bill passed, then Northern was really interested in coming for natural gas. So I worked with them extensively.

RM: Was this before they developed taconite on the Marquette Range? Or were they in the process...

LC: They were in the process of it, they made up this bill for them to develop and start putting money in. There were big mines here and they were all closing down.

RM: But they had the technology.

LC: Yes, they had technology to do this ore in Marquette. In Iron Wood and that area, the ore is much different than here. Here I think it is...when they were processing the ore, there is a waste, some type of waste of the ore and I think here it's more magnetic than in the Gogebic area. They could preserve more of the ore, or use more of the ore. That's why the process of the Gogebic ore has never taken off. So the Marquette Range has been very fortunate. And Jake and I have become very good friends. The Natural gas came in. That developed my interest. From that time on I've been interested. My brother makes parts for the air force in a little machine shop in the Ramsey area.

Employed about 20 people for about 20 years. That industry has changed quite a bit. All I would hear from people is we don't want big industries up here, just little. People throw boxes in the trunk of their car and go with them. That's what they did in Ramsey.

Little small parts for the motors. They load them in a pick up truck. To get that plant we had to get the Air Force to give us equipment, lathes and shapers and things like that to make these parts.

RM: Did this move toward a more diversified industrial base, did it spread to other communities in the Gogebic Range?

LC: No. Gogebic, they got more industry business. I was very interested in that too. A fellow came up from Illinois and he came to see me. I never knew him before. He was looking for a ski hill. I wasn't going to waste my time with this fellow because the only skiing I did as a kid was going down rock piles. He was telling me we could have 18,000 skiers in the first year of opening up a hill if I found the right hill. It would bring so many people in and so many dollars. I thought, I don't know what this guy is smoking. But anyhow, I didn't say no to him. He wanted to go out to the north end of Bessemer and Ramsey, by Wakefield. He said there's a hill somewhere out there and I've got to find it. It was the dead of winter. He said, I want you to come with me. I hadn't used snow shoes in years. So we put on snow shoes and trekked through the snow.

RM: Were there any roads?

LC: The roads only went so far and the rest we had to go in the woods. We had a map and he was looking for the highest vertical drop in Gogebic. I didn't know what he was talking about. We found it. He had a thing from there, from an airplane where you can

tell how far the vertical drop is, I don't know what you call it. He was carrying it in his hand. I didn't know what I was looking for, just looking off into the woods. After an hour he hollered, I found it. That's where Indian Head is today.

RM: That was about what year?

LC: That's in the late '50s.

RM: Was that the first ski hill?

LC: First ski hill. The first year it opened up there were 18,000 skiers that came. Now there's 100,000. So Gogebic has gotten...but I think there are some small industries.

RM: When did you leave Ramsey?

LC: I left Ramsey in '64 and went from there to Hubbell. We were finding the same problems with the copper mines. The union was very strong. They had a man there, Gene Saari who was head of the union before he went to the Steelworkers. Gene had a reputation of being a tough union...not compromising at all. Calumet and Heckler was in operation taking care of most of the people in Calumet and Lake Linden. I got involved in their labor relations at that time, trying to be a go between for the union and the mining companies, taking a strong position, sometimes against the union, sometimes against the company. It was '68 when Calumet said they couldn't do it any more.



RM: Did they have a big strike?

LC: Yes, they had a big strike. Then they didn't open up again.

RM: With the employment up there, was Calumet and Heckler, were they slowly letting people off and closing down, or were they going at full capacity for that time?

LC: They were going full capacity. It wasn't a gradual thing. They sold out to Universal Oil, and Universal Oil, whether they had a real interest in mining or just somewhere else, I never knew that. Although the superintendents and general managers, it seemed like the people wanted to work there.

RM: So in '68 at this time, Universal Oil owned Calumet...

LC: Yes, they took over. I think they bought out in '66. It was maybe three or four years. They weren't there very long. Finally they announced they were shutting down, they had an agreement. That hurt the country quite a bit.

RM: So you didn't really have an opportunity to see this closing come and do as you did in Ramsey.

LC: I tried to. I tried to work with the unions and the local people, not so much the leadership. The everyday worker, and a couple stewards were really good guys you could talk to. Some of them saw the light.

RM: Could you talk to Gene Saari?

LC: Oh yes. I could talk to him.

RM: But you couldn't get him to change.

LC: He and I were adversaries. I always like to tell the story, I was still in the Seminary and I came home for the summer vacation and this one Sunday Fr. Alinger picked me up to go for a ride. We were going up to Twin Lakes, about 20 miles from my home. We were going along South Range and there were a whole bunch of people. I said what's going on? We stopped to look and the Slavs were having a picnic. I didn't know Gene Saari from a hole in the wall. I'd heard his name but we'd never had a chance to meet. Two people were fighting for control of Yugoslavia and Tito was Communist. The speaker up there was supporting Tito. A couple of my friends were there. I said to them, who's that Communist you got up there? It was Gene Saari. I said, holy Toledo can't you find a better speaker than that. That's all I stuck around. All of a sudden a fellow came up to me and said, I'm Gene Saari. I understand you called me a Communist. I was quoting something I read in the paper maybe a year or two before that. I said, "Mr. Saari, anything that looks like a duck, walks like a duck, has feathers like a duck, we call

it a duck.” That started a big argument. He and I were going at it. All of a sudden the whole picnic was around us. We had a debate going on, a public debate. I think he lost because he couldn’t collect anymore money for Tito. He was fund raising money for this Tito issue. We sort of broke up the picnic. We were there about two hours. He and I were going at it. That was my experience with Gene Saari. He was just a tough old union guy. And I think his tactics in many ways were responsible for the closing of the mines. My Dad worked in the mine. That’s where I heard the name Gene Saari. He was also at that time, the United Miners were for the Steel Workers. I think Louis was the head of the Mine Workers nation wide. Gene was a part of that.

RM: I’m curious to ask you a question at this point. I know some of your father’s background and how...

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RM: Would you say, were you influenced by your father’s leadership activity in the mines and local politics, and also, how much influence would you say came from your dad, and was there any Catholic social justice involved in the things you did, or the direction you took?

LC: I think I got it from both my mother and my dad. My mother was always...the way she was active. They didn’t call them a name, but she was a feminist in her own day. My dad, they were both. I think basically, I remember myself as a kid during the

Depression, sometimes we didn't have two nickels together. I think that's where I really got...that influenced me, the Depression years. My dad, even though he was a boss, coming home from working two or three days a week, I knew they were having trouble financially. I remember taking my Dad's lunch pail to the mines. He used to come up sometimes from underground and we'd go sit and have lunch with him. My mother would mix a sandwich in for us too. One time there was nothing in the lunch pail. But he was so proud, he didn't want to let anybody know he...I went there and saw this. I said are you ready to eat Dad? He said no he was busy. He was trying to occupy himself. I was maybe 11 or 12 years old. I never said anything to him. It's just something that sticks in your mind. Those were tough times. A lot of times I think, why would I do that? Kids today, I feel...I don't want them to go without. I have another story I'd like to tell, or am I rambling?

RM: No, this is good.

LC: I remember when Sunny Lake Mine in Wakefield closed. It was one of the last to close. Sunny Lake, Veteran Steel owned that mine and they just spent a million dollars developing it underground. The people in the copper country, White Pine and all these places, they said these mines would never close. They'd go forever. There was talk about Sunny Lake Mine closing. I made a habit a lot of times in the afternoons I'd take an hour off from the Rectory and I'd get out to get some fresh air and I'd stop at a gas station where the guys used to gather and hear what they had to say. They'd say those mines will never close. They had a lot of hope. One day the mine closed. They shut it

right down. Laid off 600-700 people. There was a fellow in Bessemer by the name of Emil Mascotti. I don't know how you spell his name. He got the idea that he could open up that mine. He got a bunch of people together. They put so much money, I think he was asking \$10,000. If they could put \$10,000 a piece in there they had a guaranteed job. In the meantime he went to Bethlehem to visit with a fellow named Petersen who was the general manager for Bethlehem Mining. Petersen was also, in those years like here, a lot of the top officials were local residents. They grew up in the mine and they became head of the company. Petersen was a Bessemer boy and worked locally and became an official in the company, general manager or vice president of mining. That's why a lot of those mines stayed in existence because local people were in the top positions. They had interest and all. Here, Cleveland Cliffs, they don't have any guys born in Marquette or Ishpeming. They're all outsiders now. So Emil went to talk to Petersen about buying the mine. He told him, we can't sell the ore, how are you going to sell it? Emil told him, you guys are just bluffing. You don't know how to do this and that. He said we want to buy the mine. So Bethlehem sold the mine. I forget what the figure was, a couple hundred thousand. He said, all you have to do is go down there and mine it and bring it up. It's all developed. You can't sell the ore. So a number of people contributed their life savings. \$10,000 is a lot of money. Some went to the bank and borrowed money so they could have a job. The cost to keep the mines clear of water, it cost \$100 a day to pump. When Bethlehem sold this, they became responsible for pumping. They didn't sell a teaspoon. They couldn't get an order for it. I tried. I helped them. I called California, the mining industry there, I called all over. I even contacted Japan to see if Japan would buy the ore. It was high grade ore. All they were looking for was low grade

ore. So you have people who have invested their life earnings and out of a job. This is how I got to know Mr. Petersen, about 6 or 7 months we were trying to negotiate and I called Mr. Petersen up. I said how in God's name could you sell these people the mine knowing they wouldn't be able to sell the ore? He gave me the story. He said I told them that. But he was making us look like a bunch of monkeys. I didn't want to go back and say we want to sell the mine. We don't want to give him the impression we were against people working. Maybe they had a secret we didn't know. But we warned them. We sold that mine to them cheap enough that if they wanted to they could sell that mine piece by piece for junk and make a million bucks. But he said, you have to know how to do that. He said, I'll tell you what, have a junk dealer come in there and I want you and Victor Levistow, to get up a committee or be a committee of two and go to this group and tell them to sell this mine to a junk dealer. What ever they get, if they get a hundred thousand for it, we'll make up the difference so that they get their money back, except for the expense of pumping water. So I said fair enough. But in the meantime Emil Mascotti was getting some people to come in to buy the mine or to do something with the mine. Jimmy Hoffa's group even came up to look at the mine. Some of the shady characters came up. We already had a bid, I wish I could remember that figure, it was a hundred some thousand to scrap this mine. If we sold it piece by piece ourselves we could make a million bucks. But none of us knew enough about selling a mine or what the value of stuff is. As long as we could get a price and Bethlehem Steel was going to make up the difference so we could get our money back there was no problem. We presented that to the committee, the group of investors. Emil said we have these people coming in and we want to do a song and dance for them, hire you guys to work and everything. So we got

this one bid and the people wanted a job. They didn't want to scrap the mine. So every time someone came in there was more and more delay. Finally Mr. Petersen called me up and said he was going to retire in three months. After I retire the deal's off. So I told the people do you want your money or do you want to depend on someone spoofing you here. I figured out later on, all these people that were coming in, they wanted to buy the mine cheap and then scrap it individually. But they couldn't get enough money to pay these people off. Finally we sold that mine for scrap.

RM: As a package.

LC: As a package. In the meantime, I even got on the Today Show. I got them to come to Gogebic. I forget the name, I think it was Matthews. Someone had told me he was the head of the Today Show at NBC. Chancellor was the news man. Someone told me the head of the program was Michael Malta. I tried to get to this guy. Finally I got to him. I told him our plight of how these people bought the mine. We had to make it a news story and then they would come. Finally they decided it was a good news story that people had bought this mine trying to get jobs for themselves. I told them maybe if we can get the message out we can find some investors. So they sent a team up to Gogebic for 4 days and did the story. Michael Chancellor didn't come with them, but they had their own people and had group meetings getting stories. Finally they said we want to go to a house and talk to some families. It was just before Christmas. So I took them to a family in Wakefield. Someone told me it would be a nice family to visit. They interviewed them and asked the kids what do you want for Christmas. They said, we've been looking in

the catalog and we'd like to get some toy soldiers, but our Daddy is out of work so we can't afford the toy soldiers. So all we want for Christmas is a job for my Daddy. Imagine what that did when it hit the network. We got more toy soldiers...Boxes and boxes. But we didn't sell any ore.

RM: This was about what year?

LC: 1960s.

RM: This is when you were still at...

LC: St. Ann's. The impression of those kids stuck with me. They were sincere. Then they closed the program with the church choir singing Silent Night. It was just a few days before Christmas. My telephone was ringing off the hook. I got calls from all over the country. What people could do and how they could help.

RM: But nothing really came of it.

LC: No. Except we got boxes and boxes of toy dolls. That's all I did is give them to Welfare of Gogebic County. And I think we got about \$3,000 in cash. Another thing I did in Gogebic is organize the development group called GoInc (?) We raised another \$100,000 through the whole area. We hired a director. We didn't get results then, but I think they were seeing the results from the other industries.



RM: What really happened in the western end of the Upper Peninsula is the mines shut down and they went directly to sports. But that didn't really provide jobs for the miners.

LC: No. White Pine was the big job. When White Pine started expanding people started coming back from Kenosha. I went to White Pine almost twice a week with men in my car to go see the personnel. Beg them to give these guys jobs because they were good workers. In fact I got a note from them here, this is my 50<sup>th</sup>, recalling those days when I would take these guys up there. He hired most of them. Good workers. Of course he would always tell me there were strong union guys. I think they learned their lesson. I can't think of the guy's name in personnel at White Pine.

RM: You always here stories of the economy was like a roller coaster, it was up and down. This is really it. The mine is open and people have a sense that it's going to go on for a long time. Then the next day it's gone.

LC: In those years at Gogebic, there were 13 mines operating, it was a boom. They were making \$5 or \$6 an hour. They had their strikes. Long strikes. One was 130 days, but they seemed to manage and get by. The mines were good to them. They were good workers. I built a church in the little town of Ramsey. \$60,000. We paid cash for it. We had a picnic once a year, a parish picnic. Our ladies would make raviolis. They'd cook them there and sell them 10 for a dollar. We had games outside and raffles. We'd make

\$6,000-\$7,000 profit. We could put that away and pay for the church. The people were very good. But the economy in those years...I was there for 13 years.

RM: You left in...

LC: '64.

RM: Did you continue with the activity?

LC: At that time I was able to increase the organization in the UP.

RM: So you broadened your concern, not just with the area of the parish.

LC: That's right. Wherever I'd go I'd get assigned to committees and work on committees and become interested. Then my vision became more UP wide. Particularly UpCap I was there for about 12 years.

RM: Could you explain a little about what UpCap does?

LC: UpCap at that time was the Upper Peninsula organization for government programs for development. That's what the purpose was, man power to get whatever you could in the area. There was a UP wide group. I was the director of UpCap for many, many years. It helped that \_\_\_\_\_ was still in existence. I haven't been close to it for

10-12 years so I don't know what they're doing now. But we had a lot of money coming in. Training programs for people who wanted to change jobs or to find jobs locally or away from here. They had programs for the aging.

RM: When did you...After you left Ramsey, you went to Hubbell.

LC: I went to Hubbell, Escanaba, and then I went to L'Anse and here in Marquette.

RM: When you went to these different places were you involved there?

LC: I was involved in UpCap. When I came here to Marquette I sort of got...I was still involved in UpCap til maybe 10 years ago.

RM: How long have you been in Marquette?

LC: I've been in Marquette 21 years. I came to Marquette, the Bishop put me on social services and I was going to work on the tower in the Soo. They had a million dollar debt. He asked me to take that over and see if I could get rid of that debt, which we did.

RM: So you were involved in getting it sold.

LC: Paying off the debt first. We sold it for \$1.

RM: But you did get the debt paid.

LC: We raised \$1.2 million. I had a committee of friends that I work with to develop the UP. They had confidence in me. \_\_\_\_\_ was one, George Bahogney from Detroit Edison was another, Walker Cisler... Walker Cisler and I and Joe Mack were the brains, or maybe the embryo of the UP action. Operation Action was UP industries that gathered together to try and promote the UP. But George Bahogney and Walker Cisler...I talked to them about our problem with the tower. George Bahogney was the man. He worked with me to help pay off the debt.

RM: To go back to the beginning, who came up with the idea to build a tower like that?

LC: Father Monroe was a pastor there. He had a vision that he wanted to preserve the history of man and so forth. The tower was just supposed to be the beginning. The tower for a church, but he wanted to build a museum around this whole church giving the history of man in the UP. But in putting that tower in, they ran into trouble with the footings. The tower was estimated to cost \$200,000. Before they finished it was a million. They had to go down so deep and once they got started they couldn't stop. So Bishop Silaca gave permission to go along with it. Father Monroe did a study with Michigan State and they thought it was very feasible. But he gave them permission. He couldn't even pay the interest on the debt. So when we got \$1.2 million that was enough and he asked me to take it over. Guys like \_\_\_\_\_ helped.

RM: It was paid off through donation and contribution?

LC: Yes. Our plan, after 2-3 years we were trying to develop something and we were having a meeting at Lake State and Phil Luppi came to the meeting. He said what are you guys doing about the tower? Phil said why don't you guys get 100 people and get \$10,000 and get it paid off. He said, I'll put my name down for one. That opened our eyes. We'd never thought of that. So we hired a firm out of Detroit to give us some ideas. After a couple months we discovered we're doing all the work and he's getting the checks, so George Bahogney was the chair of our tower board. I told him we're doing all the work here and this guy's getting all the money and he's not doing anything for it. So we paid him off. We tried to get a list of names in Detroit. The Bishop had to make all the calls. It opened up doors for us. The first day was great. We got 5 calls, \$50,000. The Bishop and I were leaving the next day...

END OF SIDE 2 TAPE 1

LC: Life came to be real the next day. We went to one place. A fellow said I'll give you \$10,000 on the condition that you go home...how much did you raise in the UP? We said nothing. He said, you go to the UP and start raising some money and then come back to see me. We started getting some of that. The Bishop and I were talking after being there for a week. We decided to start in the UP. So we did. We raised a million. We raised a million dollars. The \$200,000 we raised down state. It was more than a hundred people. We raised it and paid it off. I was encouraging Bishop Silaca to give it away. He didn't want to give it away because people made this donation. So after Bishop Smith came in

he asked me what I should do. I said the first thing we need to do is get rid of that tower in the Soo. He said, how do you propose to do that? I said we can give it to Historical Sites. They're in a position to take care of it. He asked me to contact the donors, as many as I could. I told them. We'd have another million dollar debt on our shoulders because of repairs and maintenance. They said we just gave the money to help them out so do what you want.

RM: That was quite a project.

LC: It was a combination of that and social services. That's been my...

RM: How did you get involved, was there anything with the Upper Peninsula Jobs Coalition?

LC: The Lake Superior Jobs Coalition?

RM: Yes.

LC: That's my own. I started that here in Marquette.

RM: So the whole idea was yours.

LC: Yes. Getting a group of people together. The iron ore industry was responsible for that. In the '80s when Tilden was having troubles I talked it out with Matson and \_\_\_\_\_ and asked them to form a committee and see what we can do to help the mine. Myself and Don Ryan and somebody from the mining company, the general manager at the time Bret \_\_\_\_\_ and a couple other people started the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition for the mine to help them out. They were having problems with Algoma Steel and the taxations again and the business with the mine to make it profitable. Another story with Jake. One day I was in Lansing for a conference and after the meeting I went over to the back room to keep my contacts with people. I went to see Jake and Joe Mack. This one day I walked in the office and Joe Mack and Jake were in there. Jake said what are you doing down here today? I said I'm looking for \$50,000. They said you're kidding. Joe Mack said I'll see you later. Jake thought I was serious so I got serious. I said I got this Lake Superior Jobs Coalition and we're trying to revitalize the mine and we need money, which was true. He said "\$50,000?" I said "\$50,000." He said okay I'll see what I can do. A couple weeks after we got a state check for \$50,000. We still have some of the money, we're still using it. We have \$8,000-\$9,000 left. It's helping us with this. But that's how it was started.

RM: After it was in operation, what happened to it?

LC: We waited for something else to come up. The mining industry needed more help. We would come back. Then I found out there was no call for it and all of a sudden I was hearing how the county was dragging their feet on the whole thing. I approached Al

Wood and said we need to revitalize the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition. He said that's good. So we called a different group of people together. Al was included. I asked \_\_\_\_\_ Larson to be included but he didn't want to get involved. It expanded to what it is today, 20 some people. It's a much bigger group now. We've kept the same name. We've still got money, even though we've only raised \$22,000 from business people to help us. That was...

RM: You told me over the phone, what was President Vandement's...

LC: I asked President Vandement to be a part of the group because I always think the University should be a part of the development. So I asked him to join the group. I asked them to be co-chairpersons. John Marshall agreed to be co-chairperson.

RM: What happened with...I saw it in the paper tonight, United is pulling out. Were they involved in the discussions with the base?

LC: No. I don't know if that story is entirely true. The United thing came up at the last Jobs Coalition meeting. The fact that they were repairing airplanes, and every time I go through the airport...so we got word that they might be pulling out of here and putting small planes back in. They came in here with the intention that they would take over where American Eagle is today. But there were some delays with American Eagle at the air base with repairs. So Dr. Vandement said he would call the fellow, Voss I think his name was. American Airlines, Doug Voss. Doug informed him that Great Lakes was



\_\_\_\_\_ will be temporarily \_\_\_\_\_ will be operating in open groups where they can be maintained. They will introduce a set of 1900s to Marquette \_\_\_\_\_ to a Northern Aviation Hanger to house one plane and tarmac a second one. The policy must be exchanged with the aircraft. The new 1900s will have at least have \_\_\_\_\_ of 6 feet and will accommodate only 19 passengers. It was my understanding that they were here temporarily. So Brian had the article last night. I called Dr. Vandement this morning, but he hasn't returned the call. He's been tied up in meetings all day.

RM: So it sounds like this is just a temporary thing, that when the weather clears up...

LC: That's the impression we seem to have. Our move is to see if we can make American Eagle move faster. Another hold up was that the lights on the airfield...the FFA hadn't put them on. It takes time to put them on.

RM: So it could be that this is just a natural development. That they're pulling out now, and they'll come back.

LC: That's the understanding for now. I was surprised by the article in the paper that they are pulling out permanent.

RM: Once again, this is the Jobs Coalition getting involved and working with all this. How do you view the Jobs Coalition now, and in the future? In terms of its work?

LC: That's hard to say. We take it a project at a time. It depends if there's a need for it to exist. I think there is right now. I think county itself is pulling together now. What might come out is an important issue. We might get involved in that. We got the county officials working together, which was our prime purpose. Now we have to educate the people. These things don't come free.

RM: So this could be done, you have the air base, but as positive developments take place at the air base the Coalition doesn't have to get involved in something that needs help, or just goes into a state of dormancy. Is this something that jut evolved, or is this something you had seen developed elsewhere?

LC: It's just something I cam up with I guess.

RM: From what I've heard and read...

LC: I operate off the seat of my pants. When things work I pick another...

RM: It's better than just sitting around. Is there anything else I didn't mention or a question I didn't ask?

LC: I can't think of anything.

RM: This gets kind of off the subject, we have to shift gears. When you were growing up, your family was Piedmontese. Could you just speak briefly about some of the foods they ate in the home?

LC: We grew up in an English neighborhood. We had spaghetti and raviolis and risotto. We also had the pasties and saffron bread.

RM: Something with currents or a scone?

LC: No. Something with a crust on top and a mixture of meat and potatoes. I think we grew up on Italian and what was in the neighborhood at that time.

RM: Most of it, were you the only Italian family?

LC: Oh no.

RM: So it was a mixture, it wasn't an Italian neighborhood.

LC: No. Neighbors were Barrons, they were English. One side was Verns and the other side was Perkins. We were in the middle. We exchanged food back. We were the Italian family in the middle and two English people. The mothers exchanged recipes and things like that. I didn't really grow up in an Italian community. There were a lot of Finns around. Croatian.

RM: So the women would trade recipes and try one or the other. What were some of the things you ate in Italian, Piedmontese things? Ponacalda?

LC: Ponacalda, polenta, cod fish, baklava. My mother used to make cod fish with tomatoes and put it on top of polenta, which is my favorite dish to this day.

RM: That's with the salted cod fish.

LC: Yes. It looks like a tennis racket. They're hard to buy now. There's one place that had it, and that's Andriachi's in Ishpeming. A number of years ago I went up there and brought one home. It was salty.

RM: But then you have to tell the cook how to cook it.

LC: My mother was here at that time. My mother used to let it soak over night and get salty.

RM: Was there a sausage, Dante Perico in Bessemer told me that there's a Piedmontese sausage called saltisa? Could you describe that?

LC: It's a pork sausage. It's like cudighi and you put it in a casing. You can let it dry and make hard salami or after it's made you can boil it. My mother used to do that and

cabbage. Cut the saltisa in small pieces and cook it with cabbage. That's good with polenta too. We used to make it as kids. Of course in the Depression years we made a lot of things for money. As a family we used to, my mother and dad made saltisa. My mother mostly, she liked to do those kinds of things.

RM: Did she slaughter the pig and all?

LC: You buy the pork for about 3 or 4 cents a pound. You cut it off the bone and grind it up and make the sausage.

RM: Do you remember the spices?

LC: No. You can go to Hurley, WI and get it. There used to be a group of Italians, you know where Bujack is? They used to have a big bread mixing machine, a big open one. They'd get together on a weekend, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and make the saltisa. I put an order in. I didn't go to make it. The Jako Succa was the head guy and he and my dad were second cousins. They grew up in the same town. He'd always make me a whole bunch of it. I'd pay him for what they invested in it. But the rest of them had to go and work. And then they'd have a party and wine and do sausage for the meal. I could hang it up in the attic of the Rectory where it was dry. Then you can have hard salami. A lot of it was in lard. It would age.

RM: But a lot of it could be cured and aged as hard salami. That's interesting. About how round, about an inch?

LC: That size. You can have the big casing if you want.

RM: The making of it in Bujack was a social thing?

LC: Yes. The guys would all get together, some of them aren't even Italian, they just want to make the sausage. And then they stopped making it because some agency came in and they didn't have a license to do that.

RM: So they saw this as a commercial endeavor.

LC: We sold to a few people.

RM: This was going on at what time?

LC: The '60s and '70s. Finally they got too big.

RM: Also, the immigrants, most of them had passed away, or was it passed on to the...

LC: It was passed on. Some of the old guys are there. Jako Succa is there. That's a nickname.

RM: And he was the fellow in charge and the son of immigrants?

LC: He was born over there.

RM: Had they done this a lot earlier?

LC: They've done it for years.

RM: Why I'm asking all this is I'm the Director of Upper Peninsula Studies. One of the things I want to do is put together all this food information. So I ask people of ethnic background, what's something you remember because I'm tired of myself forgetting about it and other people forgetting and then we lose all this culture in foods. So that's why I'm asking all this on the sausage and all.

LC: I was only out there once to Bujack. It was somebody's farm. I saw the setup, it was nice.

RM: Was it something permanent where they would come together?

LC: Once a year. They'd make enough sausage for the year.

RM: What time...

LC: In the fall. There was a store in Laurium, the name was Italian, it had pizzas. He used to make this sausage too, but he stopped making it. These days he has good sausage. I used to go up and buy it from him. There's a place in Hurley that makes it. You know Bob Jerkavich, he goes up and gets some for me once in a while. He's from Marquette here. I'll show you some...

RM: Angeline Cornetti.

LC: That was made by Perico's in-laws. His in-laws used to make that. When they first started Cornetti's they weren't very good, but then they got that recipe.

RM: I think I've had them before. Was that something Piedmontese made?

LC: No.

RM: You didn't have them in your house.

LC: We bought them from the baker.

RM: When we were talking about food in the household, did your mother make the Italian breads or did she rely on...



LC: She made her own bread. She made 9 or 10 loaves at a time of American bread.

RM: But nothing special from the old country.

LC: No.

RM: That's one thing that happened in the UP is you had all these ethnic groups and they lived close to one another and blended.

LC: My parents too, after they married they wanted to Americanize. They wouldn't speak Italian in front of us kids.

RM: Did you learn Italian from them?

LC: No. I learned a little Italian just from going up here, but not from them. They spoke English. My Dad wanted to be a good American citizen. My mother, she went back in '71 I think. She and my sister and my brother Joe.

RM: But there was no desire for your Dad, even if he could have gone, to go back.

LC: No. In fact I went in '71 alone. It was before my Dad died. I asked him if he wanted to go and he said no. He wanted to be American. I could never understand why.

I could understand why he wanted to be American, but I couldn't understand why he didn't want to go back home.

RM: My Dad was in that category. He did go back, but it was many, many years after he could have. He had the money and could have gone. Then finally he did. It was just kind of...I think his uncle had come over here and then he decided to go back. There's some people that go back and forth very frequently, and others left and that was it.

LC: There's a lady that I know in California and she goes back every summer. It's a little town San Gusta Genavesi where my Dad was born. She spent the whole summer there. When I go out to California I might see her again. There's a group of Piedmontese that get together with these friends of mine that I visit. They're very active in this Piedmontese Club. So I usually see these people there.

RM: Where is that?

LC: In Glendale, CA. But my dad never did. So when I went over in '71 my dad was already deceased. I wanted to go up north to see where he was born. So I did go and I met a cousin of his. I had a heck of a time finding him, but we finally found him. I only had 3-4 hours there. We had about 2 hours together and he's a spitting image of my dad. I was just startled. We had a couple hours to talk in the best we could.

RM: Do you have enough Italian to understand?

LC: I could force myself to, at that time. I went just a couple months ago and I lost...

END OF SIDE 1 TAPE 2

RM: That's kind of my level of Italian. I've done some translating of it, probably to understand it and speak it I'd have to get a phrase book out.

LC: The first time I went there to Italy I was advisory board to Alexander Hamilton Insurance. They would take about 50 advisors from around the country. They would take one trip a year to have a meeting. A 3 or 4 day meeting. This one year we went to Italy to Rome. By the time I got on the bus to go to the airport, I could speak with the bus driver. This last time I went there I had a hard time. I was there in November.

RM: That was a real treat for you.

LC: That was great.

RM: How many other priests were there?

LC: Over a thousand priests. The figure I got from the agency is that there were 1,070, but on the tape that I saw of the mass and service, the TV announcer said 1500.

RM: Do they do that every year with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary?

LC: No, because the Holy Father is 50 years.

RM: I thought they had something where they would bring...

LC: First time.

RM: Only time. Not for another 50

LC: Unless the next Pope that comes in, they celebrate together.

RM: Where did you celebrate mass?

LC: At St. Peter's Basilica.

RM: Where did they put everybody? Just all around the altar?

LC: There were about 1500 priests, 118 cardinals, 70-80 bishops, besides all the people that were in there. There were 100,000 people outside. I think the Basilica seats about 8,000. They had us in chairs around the altar. I had 17 lay people with me from here and California. So we got tickets for them for the mass. The place was jammed, plus the 100,000 people outside.

RM: After the mass did you come out?

LC: After the mass there was a concert for about 45 minutes. After that we had lunch with the Pope and then a group picture with all the priests.

RM: So they were able to kind of personalize it with all those people.

LC: It was just by chance is all it was. We were getting our pictures taken and we were on steps. Everybody wanted to get to the Pope. I was just standing there and I got pushed right in front of him. We were eyeball to eyeball and he said congratulations, where are you from. I said Marquette, MI.

RM: So it wasn't just a quick handshake, you had a few words with him. That was kind of a surprise.

LC: I never expected...although I wanted my picture taken I was from here to the computer away fro him.

RM: I remember when Vice President Gore came here, he was a candidate and he came to Marquette so we went out to see him. I bought his book and I thought I wonder if I can get him to autograph it. Then I realized the secret service was there and I didn't think it was going to happen. So my wife and I positioned ourselves. He's going to walk down here. We talked to some of the kids that were doing guard duty and they said he's

coming down here and so on. We got up on the stage and we couldn't really see him because we were on the side. But down he comes and I had my pen and book. When he gets there he's shaking hands. I said can you sign the book. Before I could even say sign the secret service had grabbed my hands. He used his own pen and signed it. It was really in the space of a handshake. In the same amount of time and he moved right along. But we were in the right spot to see him. I didn't particularly care about his talk, I wanted the autograph. Sometimes you can position yourself.

LC: I'll tell you a story about Pope Paul VI. This is the time I went over with the Alexander Insurance. Father Len was living with me in Escanaba at St. Ann's he was superintendent of Holy Name High School. He and the superintendent of the public school were good friends. He was Irish and showing Father Len this flag. He said someday I would like to get this blessed by the Pope. He said I'm not Catholic, if you ever know somebody going to Rome let me know. He said, Father Cappo is leaving tomorrow. Maybe he would...I was packing and he said here's something for you. It was an Irish flag. I didn't want to carry this flag all over. I was tempted many times, he'd never know if it was blessed by the Pope or not. But my conscious bothered me. So we had this audience and a group that wanted to go. At that time they didn't have the new hall, Hall 6<sup>th</sup> is where the Pope meets everybody now. But they had the Hall of Blessings. It was a long narrow hall. All the people from our group and the other groups went to this audience and I'm carrying this dumb Irish flag under my arm. At that time they had these barricades and they used to carry the Pope up on a chair. You could hear the cheers way in the back and we were close to the front. The Pope was going from one

side, then he got to where I was standing and I dropped the flag and he said good morning Father and blessed the flag. There was no faking. There was no general blessing for everybody. Everybody holds up their rosary.

RM: Well then you have pretty good luck.

LC: It's like you said, you got yourself positioned in the right place. He could have been turning to the other side. I held the flag. He said \_\_\_\_\_

RM: Sometimes it's amazing when you get in a crowd that way that you can have that attraction.

LC: There was a fellow in the group and he was Baptist. He never grumbled to me. But I heard him say I don't want to go see the Pope I don't believe the man. But he was forced to go because from there we were going to Florence. So he had to come or sit in the bus. He decided he wasn't going to sit in the bus for 3 or 4 hours. I made the mistake of seeing what his reaction would be. He was there and I could see he was getting a little excited. When the Pope turned around to bless he reached out his hands. He said, I touched him. He got caught up in the spirit of the thing. I said for a fellow who didn't want to go you got pretty excited. He said "how did you know?" I said, "I heard you grumbling." He said, "I shouldn't have done that." He was very nice.

RM: Okay, well this has been a good session. I thank you.

