

Today is August 5, 1993 I am in Big Bay, Michigan speaking with David Spelgatti we are going to be talking about boarding houses

PS: Sorry, You were saying about the

DS: about the point you brought up about the of the boarding houses company owned and it seems to me that it was true in the matter two boarding houses that were in North Lake, that is the Ishpeming township on highway 41, you turn off its some new street I don't know what they call it Westwood I think where the high school is, those two homes I visited a few times but the memories are very little about them and all I know is my cousin and his wife and Margaret Spetgatti ran one of them for maybe four or five years I think and then other than that I don't remember. Talking about that one comes to mind that also in Palmer where the Empire mine is now there was a boarding house right in Palmer somewhere it was on the right side of the road going to Palmer right across now where there is a nursing home Palmer Home I think it is called. There I went with the pastor or St. Paul's in Neganuee, used to go down there once a week to say mass. And I remember most I remember about it was the smell of moonshine. The woman who ran it made moonshine and sold it to the residents you know. I think a good part of them were probably Italians or Finns and that Palmer mining operation has been dead since 1910 or 12 I guess, somewhere around in there but this was an Italian woman who ran it and as I say the only contact with it was go down there in this big upstairs room where they kind of used it as a recreational room, card table and what not, and that is where she sold it by the shot.

PS: enterprising lady, ha ha ha

DS: yeah, right. I remember the pastor telling me, you know I was interested into going into the seminary and one day he drove up the rode a little bit and , I don't know what you would call it coop, and he stopped and smoked a wellington bent pipe all his life then he filled his pipe and then to drive back to Neganuee when he just took me by the head like this and he turned it to look out the back window and he says hope your never sent to take care of this hell hole. That's finally the lady gave up the boarding house, there were no boarders around anymore then they were all already moved into the Neganuee area, the Gwinn area, they were married and into that sort of place so she gave it up.

PS: when the boarder married they generally moved out?

DS: No, I would say a good number of those woman I recall were widows or so like that so and wound up marrying one or another the borders you know. Most of the time it was the boarder who got the best break. They got the free board and a women to do all the work. But the North Lake ones there I would say when my cousin, I was up there a couple times as a little boy but I can't remember the site of them even, where they were, I got a hunch that they were probably, the whole town was a company town, it had to be somewhere near what we ultimately got which was the community hall, the company built. There were two bowling alleys and a basement and then you had a little bit of a gym and you know how they played basketball then you had to, you couldn't dunk because if you dunked your head would go through the ceiling, today. But my guess is the boarding house is lets try to remember, was across the street. Two together, two big long colored like my walls here, buildings.

PS: Sandstone?

DS: No, no they were wood.

PS: but sort of a sandstone coloring then?

DS: yeah something like that. And I think one of them, if I am not mistaken, was not operating anymore. My cousin went through an ad on that last one and they stayed there three or four years.

PS: But when was that?

DS: I would have to say 1920, something like that and then when Ford was offering five dollars a day when it was opening up in Iron Mountain and Kingsford you know. My cousin was victimized by that thought of five dollars a day and ran off up there and that lasted his family, he must have been through high school already when Ford closed up the plant up there. Ford was cutting the wood here in Big Bay finally looked there for these wooden Station Wagons. And anyhow they moved back to Neganuee. My father who was a boss at the Athens mines in Neganuee got his step-brother back into the mines and ultimately died here. The only home that I really now about personally and you know kind of lifestyle and what was involved, was that of a lady that I called grandma. It was a distant cousin on my mother's side. She came over here, was married and came over here and her husband died here, I don't remember when but that's before I am around so he must he must have died somewhere before 1915. and then she came back here, again I would say maybe around 1915 and ran that house there until there well one boarder the last one and he went to live somewhere else, I don't remember where. His name was John Paris. At one time this book

PS: AHH, OK. Yeah I have seen picture.

DS: She had as many as, I'm trusting the memory, I have always 27 because I was thinking last night trying to visualize that big attic that was converted into a barracks like and said there were three double beds on the right side of the wall and walk between the three on this side and that was half the attic so you had room for twelve. And then the back half as we called it, like that as I remember, had I think also there was five, for some reason or another there was a back stairwell and so I think it took away room for another double bed. Seems to me there were five in there, that would be ten, see so then that would be twenty-two.

PS: And then you said that they slept on double shift so she could actually accommodate 44?

DS: In a sense yeah, but as I just don't remember either that I was around at night to see that operation, all I was told was that when the mines were working steady, the two shifts, that one got out of bed and went down for their breakfast and picked up their dinner buckets that she prepared and went off to the mines and the other one maybe they met on the way coming back and

PS: you were a little boy then?

DS: yeah, maybe five-six years old. We would go down to get the milk. Grandma always had a couple of pigs, a couple of chickens and a couple of cows, a big garden, two big hay fields to take care of you know so as a widow she had a daughter, became my aunt, married my mother's brother, uncle . Of course he helped out with the chores and things, taking care of the cows but she always had to my mind always four or five good helpers among the boarders who pitched in. Helping then of course collecting wood for the winter, you know tho heat an old wood barn really. Hay time I know my dad and ultimately his two brothers who bordered there and married, and my mother two, he says to me kind of took care of three, I just found out good wives and I can picture the lady now as I just talking about her as sitting in this kitchen with the old wood stove, that is all there was, worked if I remember correctly a six burner, wood stove either she was cooking a stew of some kind or if you heard about it, corn meal mush, and either sausage cudagees as they called it know a days. And at the same time sitting in the middle of the floor in the evenings when I went down to get our milk. We lived oh maybe a quarter of a mile up the street from Negaunee Street there, beginning of Highway 40, up the hill and down the hill, through a little woods that you know could scare a kid if he heard a move. I would always run through that. To get across the road of the boarding house and she would be sitting there either patching

something, these woolen underwear that miners wore and one foot churning milk while she was sewing this thing and with a chair beside her and her three children; Paul was the oldest boy, Ida was the oldest girl, and Purina who just visited me with her daughter out in California who is in her 90th birthday, she is the only one who didn't help around the house very much she worked downtown in the leavens and the lowinsteens dry good stores. She lived to be 90. Grandma with all the work that she had to do there lived, I would have to check it for sure, but somewhere around 1968 or so she died. At that age in her 70's, so hard work never killed anyone I guess.

PS: no

DS: that is what they say and so she would be sitting there doing these two chores at the same time and I know Nona couldn't read a line I never did even see her sign her name. But she was listening to the lessons with the three kids who were high school age at that time and they had the books turned upside down, but the page there and you know she was asking them what does it say here, what are your supposed to study night.

Napoleon was the only fellow who could do three things at one time, well I says I got a match for her. She probably did maybe even four, or had her eyes on four because probably as I picture this the kitchen wasn't really much wider than this and about maybe once and half that long and sitting in the middle of that floor doing those chores. Stove cooking, patching, and churning , and listening to school lessons, they'd back I knew what they were... they was no aluminum I don't think at that time. Pots, not pots for bread and mix up the dough and wait for it to rise.

PS: Oh sure the....

DS: to bake the bread..

PS: yeah.

DS: She would make two or three of those sitting there waiting, then before she went to bed at night she'd have to bake it to.

PS: Yeah right.

DS: I never saw her bake it but I ate a lot of that nice bread.

PS: What a treat....

DS: Butter that she made things of that sort. She had a lot of help even amongst the men borders to in some of the house type keeping, help clean upstairs. I remember her doing all the washing, sheets and things of that sort.

PS: She did the laundry for the men to?

DS: Sure, where else was there to go, nobody. There was a as far as I remember a Chinese laundry in town that was only after I was ordained that I remember anything about that laundry because we had our collars starched there for awhile. ????. Scotty guess I might say took care of the chickens and the cows. Couple of the others including my house keepers father, Guy Atano Belltramenie, he did a little bit of work with them for the maintenance but these were in it's last years when it was down to maybe 5 or 6 borders that I remember. That didn't marry and then stayed there and one by one Stephanie's father went back to the old country and remarried, he was a widower, remarried and stayed i think those days passports were valid for two years or something like that. And so he stayed home almost two years then came back again to Nora's. Worked in the mines for this I would know more accurately, until 1936 I think he went back and stayed there and died there fifteen-twenty years later. The year before he went back and stayed the year before I went to Rome to study which was in 37'. I do remember I was responsible for a lot of the correspondence, my mother did most of the corresponding and writing to girlfriends. My mother was.. see her up there that was 54 years ago my ordination day picture, Mom and dad.....

PS: They look very proud...

DS: Mother was a librarian in the village back there in Italy where she was more in the dramas and things of that sort. They presented home type entertainment and they would say she wrote the letters back to the parents for some of these bachelors. They would tell her what to write and what to say. She was I guess through correspondence I don't know about a match maker but brought ultimately together those who had girlfriends back in Italy. Her own story; my dad came in 1902 but they never married until 1914.

PS: I see.

DS: Then somewhere around 1908-9 his grandma at that time had twenty-some borders watched him and my dad went to work . He often told the story of 12 hours for a \$1.27 a day, and the highest he ever got was a \$1.68 a day. In the mines for 12 hours and coming home and coming home as a little boy he was the oldest of five orphanages plus the two that when I was done had the boarding house in North Lake. Their father died and the mother remarried and the guy didn't want two boys that she had so grandpa said " I got five in the hay barn and theirs room for two more." He raised them so they were like brothers. The seven of them then say she was the matcher maker suggesting whether or not to ????? and my dad to you know... you got a girlfriend back in Italy he said "nope." well don't you think it is time to get married? And he said "No I am not interested in any of that." So about four years later I guess in 1913 she again suggested it to him saying "Wise old lady had written to my grandpa and told him she had a good man here for her oldest daughter which was

Sarina." Send a picture. So the picture came , I don't know if it came in the winter months of 1913 or the very first days well it would still be winter of 1914. And she showed my dad the picture, and he said "How much is it going to cost me?" you know to send for her like that. It's like ordering from Sears and Roebucks.

PS: Mail order brides.

DS: Yeap. right

DS: Well I don't know but if your interested I guarantee you'll get a good wife. And she knew mom it wasn't just that they were related when she was back home between their widowhood. Two times I think she was over there so she knew the family pretty well. So she inquired a fellow by the name of Felix Shaboto in Negaunee as kind of a consolit representative to Italy and also a salesmen for ocean fairs....

PS: Travel agent...

DS: Yes, he had a grocery store that supplied the bordering houses that were around, and for a \$100 they were able to send for her. So she gave him the \$100 bucks and send her mom and arrived on her birthday which was April the 10th and that happened to be Good Friday. And that time they came across Canada into Sault Saint Marie and then crossed over in Sault Saint Marie and took the what was called the South Shore up to Negaunee and Ishpeming. South Shore went on to Copper Country to before it went out of business. Told my dad she would be on tonight's train on Good Friday, tonight on the train go up to the depot and meet her, she would probably be the only lady getting off see. So the train came in at around midnight and my dad went up there but as I know him he never denied it he'd just look at me and grin. He hid behind one of the pillars, buttress and all and came home and said "No women got off." Well it was a good thing that Mr. Turzogi's cousin came James Gatoni had a tavern down the street and he knew she was coming to see. So he took a walk up there to. So he saw this poor little girl walking up and down and a little bit bewildered and lost. The train went on to Ishpeming you see, so he took her home. He went over and talked to her in Italian and she said she knew she was in good hands and he took her down to his... he lived upstairs in the tavern right there in Negaunee. And the next morning brought her down to the bordering house and the shift that was having breakfast coming home from work was having their breakfast when he came in with my mom. 10 to 12 bachelors said "If he don't take her I will." You expected that was today though. That was April the 11th and on May 11th they were married in the longest time they spent together was the half hour or so at the rectory preparing for the wedding on May the 7th.

PS: Your dad really was an unwilling bridegroom.

DS: Yeah, they had 52 years together. Never heard them quarrel once in awhile they would tease a bit, my dad would say to her even after they moved in with me down in Marquette when I was in the newspaper business across the street from the court house he would say to her. "Some place, some place here you got a sock full of money someplace." She would say "Yep, there it is right there." and point to me. They paid my way through the seminary at that time my first six years \$250 dollars worth board and room for a year of school.

PS: Considering what we pay today...

DS: That same school today is operating down in Wisconsin and the tuition today is around I think \$2,100 right now for board and room, plus the education. So .. but about four years later my mother and grandma said we got a good girl back in Italy for Uncle Amadaio is the first one. So he said "okay send for her." They came the same way and waited a month and married and then the third brother did the same thing, sent for the sister. Regina married Amadaio and Anglaine, Angela, Angealinea married Henrioc, Henry spelled in Italian. Like I said they are all dead know only in recent years and same thing the two step brothers that when Mosimo and Margareta ran the North Lake Boarding House all have died within the last fifteen years. So a lot of the memories that might have been available so then all the other people that might have had any knowledge are all gone. So the only thing I know was grandma had a big garden to, most of those women did the gardening and she had a big garden. And I now my dad used to go down and he kept a big one himself and sometime go down and help weed the garden or things of that sort as the numbers borders diminished. Depended more on my father and his two brothers to go down there. In the mean time she wound up as I can recall it there was a fellow they called ??? (chicken) a rooster.

PS: A ladies man?

DS: Not necessarily. He was a bartender for his cousin and never married and when he died he was the second last of the borders. I remember two went back to Italy and I saw them, ??? and Mienilli family is out of Gwinn and that area. There is a Maienilli jewelry store in the Westwood Mall. They both went back and were victimized, they both went back with the idea of marrying my mother's two sisters, but neither one of them were interested. And died, one died and the other we go out and visit this September is in her 84th year she'll be in 85th year in September. They got trapped by expired passports and Mussolini wouldn't let them out. They went to Milan from out in the country villages where their passports... It happened to be Labor

Day and the embassy was closed in the Milan office, they went home and the day after they came back and they were the government were not allowed to, they expired too bad, so them. Now the last one John Paris which was the last one that I remember he spent I would say at least 30-35 years with Nona as we call it there. And the last one she really had in the boarding house besides her family. Married off returned , and came back then with wives or later sent for them.

PS: Did she set up any matches for any of the other fellows?

DS: I wouldn't be aware of that, I don't think so. I know that indirectly , positively directly in my mothers and through mom and what not and my fathers two brothers. Other than that I don't remember anybody that she made worth time to fix up. I got a hunch she might of got so for a few, she never succeeded with this John Paris and this

PS: the rooster

DS: Yeah, casper, Casper Gazette, Gazette. And they were the last ones who died there and I wound up and I wound up of taking care of their burial and their estates or whatever you want to call it. Which wasn't very much on either side. I was involved with a lot of them in some way or another. And there was last year they were sending a notification that so and so died, it left wives. It was a thing that I could never understand, how they could leave women over there and have a family of three or four kids and not send for them. Basically, I think the thinking in their parts was that they were all going to go back home.

PS: yes, yes

DS: we make our fortune in the mine, some of them. I can not in any way point out that there might have been any monkey shines I would say on the part of some of the family over there and then had a girlfriend here that they maybe lived with, I don't know that to be the case. In her boarding house my first assignment was in Iron River, not in Iron River but in and . And there I know there was a lady who ran a boarding house, while I was there she still had two boarders there. Were married through what they had. I find out later that they had family back in Italy.

PS: A family on each side of the ocean.

DS: I'd say the only place I say that happen or became aware of that was that time up there in Iron County. But it was always you know it seemed like the last supper to see in the dining room

you know there's this kitchen like that and the dining room it was this way and up.

PS: A T shaped

DS: ten- twelve husky men sitting there gobbling up and they made the was a broiler full and a lot of those boys, you know men, were involved in hunting and fishing too and so whatever they caught they brought back, so that helped with the budget. I think she, if I remember correctly, she charging only a dollar a day.

PS: Oh my

DS: for board and room, laundry and anything else that was necessary. As I say many of them pitched in with the chores. Especially during hay time or lumbering through wood for firewood. And some of the heavy work around the house they helped maintain their property with the garden also a little bit. She had two gardens, one right close to the house for lettuce and tomatoes and things like that she needed for cooking and then the stuff that took a long time to grow like cabbages and all that kind of stuff was another plot there.

PS: The house itself, was it sort of a big victorian kind of structure?

DS: No, it seemed to me it was a two story L shaped type building. The kitchen was added on, downstairs she had the kitchen, you came into the kitchen and you walked straight through and up a couple of steps to the dining room and that was the length of the house across the front. Behind on either side of the door of the dining room one side was the stairwell and one bedroom, and that is where uncle Scottie an auntie Ida had their bedroom after they married and then on this side there was kind of a today we call them archways. You went in and there was grandma's bedroom and the bedroom for Purina, the other daughter and Paul, he slept with the boarders. And then there was no upstairs to the kitchen, that was kind of added on I guess for the boarding house area so that she could go into that business. And upstairs there was this just kind of a partition about half and half with six beds one side and then the other side I think there were only four, two that I remember distinctly and I think two with the stair well that went down.

PS: What about bathroom?

DS: I was just going to say there was a two holer outside, specials you know. I remember magazine that used to come here, I think there was Remenice, are you familiar with that?

PS: Yes, I have seen that.

DS: ok, you just put it over there, there is a little line about little boys being brought to the boarding house, boarding house you know and as they were showing the boarding house off the little boy says to the mother "there is a sugar bowl under each bed". This was the memorial

PS: This is the new edition that I haven't seen yet, oh that sounds like fun. Now I haven't seen that edition. What about taking baths?

DS: Well there were showers at the mines you see so that is where they got their baths. The rest of it when they came home if they were up on each other they'd wash outside. There were a couple of spickets that came out and I know my dad used to say that Nona, started coming home from the mines you know in his beginning years. He sat two or three times really tired and cried. When he got home he would sit on this long bench along the bench there where the miners sat, took off their clodhoppers and underneath them most of them then wore in them days sneakers and washed up the with a towel and wipe his face you know and cool him off. So that's the way they had it, there was no, the boarder emptied his own , his sugar bowl when they came down you know. They went out to this little so they emptied their bowls and did their duty, came back for breakfast went to bed or went to work. The earlier crew went to work and the others had breakfast and went to bed. And so she was constantly cooking, constantly needing flour and making bread, constantly repairing. The miners washed their own clothes, most of them she had you know, they washed them at the mine really and brought them home wet and the wash wash machine before the electric came out

PS: with the ringer?

DS: yeah with the ringer, and if she, they didn't do a good job cleaning, washing them she would throw them in the dish machine and have who ever owned them do the washing of it and then take it out and dry it and if they were torn or buttons off or things of that sort she fixed them up. Auntie Ida I think was assistant cook and general housekeeper, she was the oldest of the girls, the two girls. Purina worked and brought home descent, I shouldn't say decent but for those days, but she went home went to personal needs of her, her sister, and her brother. I can't remember anything other than that out of the ordinary except that everyone that I knew in town had great love for Nona as they called her and the marvels at how she could do, trying to work you know with that size place. But I say she was a loveable woman and person. I never heard anyone say a bad word about her and she wasn't like I heard about some other places, like that place in Palmer, that I was thinking of. They used to call

, if you ever heard that word.

PS: I don't know that.

DS: I can't figure out anything but , to me it gives me no word to hang onto, except that she was the home operator period.

PS: I see so she was a madame then basically, as a grapple?

DS: Yes, no no grapple, no grapple idea at all just I don't know if it was a dialect word maybe for the head honcho, the main cook. No no there is no grothle involved. I never heard that in anyone except for that one in Palmer.

PS: That is what is was referring to.

DS: Yes that one in Palmer probably what's the word milk most of the money that those guys had, with a little bit. That is what they say I can't prove it except that the pastors tell me that's one hell of a hell hole they say. It's the, my badge, after I was ordained, even he said if they ever assign you to Palmer I will shot you first. And the day that the Empire mine down there, my dad never said he remembered when Palmer was rooming with the iron ore business and went to pot in pause 57 years of mining, never dreamed that it would come back, he didn't see it come back. He did see the development up in Ispeming and , a little bit.

PS: What did the miners do for boarders, what did they do for fun?

DS: for recreation, a lot of card games and what not. Some took a walk every night it would be maybe a little over a quarter of a mile from the boarding house to up town in Negaunee there where the fire hall is and then Iron street and go to the taverns. Most of them went to Jim and stayed at grandma's there. And I suppose they shot pool. I remember going there with my dad, payday nights go to town to cash the check and stop and have one spooner of beer and then a chocolate bar for me and then if they ran into someone they had a second beer and I would sit there by the pool tables and Jim's tavern, and there was a slot machine there and every nickel if you didn't get any you turn the little lever and you got a roll of mints like life savers. Not many of them took them you see I would just sit there and if some one put in a nickel and got nothing and walked away then I would turn the button and come home with a pocket full of mints, rolls of mints. And then they played ball, which was standard. And then on Sundays they went to some of these guys who were married and had homes or built wooden framed houses and courts. And they would have tournaments against between say the

people against the Piedmont team,

but they rotate those tournaments on weekends. Picnics a lot, a couple of barrels of beer on the weekend and then they would hang around there all day and night and then it was fourth of July every Saturday and it would Sunday because they used to bring dynamite home and carbohyde and then they would have cans and put the stick in there and blow the covers off the cans up there where Teal Lake is. As you come up the hill there is a curve where you would come down and come into Neganuee on your way to Marquette and Teal Lake you had to call it the pagent ground, that was pretty much picnic area for them. I don't remember any except on from Gwinn that was in the moonshine business who was caught three times and Michigan was the only state where the four time law was life imprisonment.

PS: No kidding.

DS: And this fellow was caught and of course I knew him because he was from my fathers area and he had raised a family of I think three boys and a girl. He jumped bail, \$5,000 bail which was repayed to guy who gave it to him, who had the grocery store in Negaunee and he jumped on the caboose, or the train in Negaunee and those days there was this steam engine that used to go to Chicago, and in Chicago a train to New York and he missed the boat by about 20 minutes and he hired a boat to take him out to meet the boat and then he beat the raft anyhow and then never came back, he stayed over there. He's the only one that I know that was involved in boot lagging on a large scale, you know to the bars in town and things of that sort. People came there, I know a few others like there, Casper, Gazette he was because I don't know any other word, but he was the guy who stood by and boiled the mash you know, to supply the you know six month old wishing it was not even six hours when it was being peddled. Put it on ice quick then it would cool off and the all the way and in the hot water bottles. That is the way they used to travel, peddling in the lake with four or five water bottles hanging down each side under their coats and they went to town and stopped off and made their deliveries.

PS: How about wine making?

DS: Wine making, grandma didn't have the basement facility but my father's house that he bought he had a big basement. Everybody had a big basement there at the house and

(Side 2) from California, from Fresno and Valley there and the man that was one of the immigrants to Neganuee that had spent a year or so at the boarding house too before he married, his son Slatter sold the vineyards out and invested in MGM and made a fortune. They would get the grapes and get them to our house,

and of course my memory of that is in prohibition time already, and I know that the _____, the state police they used to be called _____, was horses and up at the end of Iron street there would be the barn and the barracks of these police. They would follow these trucks that were getting the grapes and how much and things of that sort and standing there when they were emptying the trucks and bringing these baskets of grapes down into our basement and policemen, state policemen picking grapes off a bunch you know and watching how much was going in and horse stomping their huffs there. But they never bothered anybody except those who were making moonshine to sell. The Italians were mighty smart they don't, bootleggers never sold a drop that came from a grape mash. That was theirs, they made the corn junk; sugar and corn you know, and the state police often wondered _____ then they would ask the questions and I remember my dad and his brothers explaining to them how to make the wine and it's for their own use.

PS: It was considered food wasn't it?

DS: sure it was for the Italians yeah. Coffee and tea and that stuff. They didn't know what it was _____ that it was no good. They had to have their pitcher of wine

I remember with a half of ton of grapes you could fill 2 fifth gallon barrels with the grapes. Then I remember mashing it you know, they would have few buy a pair of white boots, hip boots.

PS: You really did the stomping?

DS: yeah, and others did it even bare feet. I remember they would wear an old, in those days women wore what they called bloomers. So that is what they would put on and they would get into the barrels and then stomping away and then get out and wash their feet and let it ferment. I am picturing in our basement at least six fifty gallon barrels on our bench like on one side and six on the other. So most of them each bought a half of a ton. Once they stomped it and then drew it off and then had to barrels put out in the barn and had the barrels into which they poured the wine. Like Christmas time, usually Christmas time they would finish up the old stuff and ready to tap open the new barrel. And no drunkenness at all it was simply took the place of coffee or tea when there's the home's milk, this was it. Never saw any of our folks, relatives and everybody got drunk. I know a few who developed a drinking habit but it wasn't from that it was from going up town to the saloons and the moonshine and mixing it with beer you know. It is what they call today a boilermaker, you know a shot and a bottle of beer. Whiskey and a bottle of beer. So as I say, my dad I never saw him drunk once in his life at all. He was pretty much the patriotic for all those people, and being a boss ultimately, he got to be boss because he was a

good miner. He worked safely and insisted on working safely and he captains of the mines in this area all came from England, Cornwall and the miners as soon as they came from over here they were captains. This captain took to my dad, Captain

when they started the Aspen mine Captain said to my dad, "Come with me." And from the Negaunee mine he went with him and the officials of the company, same one that's on strike right now, CCI, turned the first and handed the shovel to my dad, and he was with it till it closed. 57 years of responsibility. And then of course the company was

for welfare and all of that kind of stuff, but he never ran for political office. He wouldn't do that. But I think sometimes he had more influence with the welfare department than did the supervisor. If he saw something that wasn't right, it was going to be corrected and you're going to do this. You're going to give this women money for groceries and things of that sort, period. A lot of pleasant memories. But that wine business of course went into the moonshine because they didn't throw the mash away, it was great mash. There they'd get a couple more boxes of grapes and either hand crush it or stomp it in what they called a soya, a half barrel. That half barrel was used to draw the good stuff off after it fermented. They'd have a still and I had my father still it's going to go into our archives here in the Italians in Ishpeming. Where one of the

officers is storing it until we get a place to set up for our own museum and entire enheratige. And they'd boil it down and I think all of them, they took turns that went on for usually the grapes came in last August early September. Moonshining went on from maybe middle of October until Thanksgiving. Before everyone, you know, would go on boiling, wash boil, you know, copper boiler, they'd probable half a ton of mash from the grapes usually made four to five boilers of grappa as the Italians called it, which was 100 proof. Anything less than a hundred proof was thrown back on the next boiler. All of them then had their ten gallon barrels with the grappa and that was at the boarding house they didn't have it. So they'd come by our house and there was an entrance in the basement coming from the mine, they'd go down and take their shot and then go on down to the boarding house for their meals and take their jug of wine. Maybe that last them a week, maybe it would last them two three days depending on what they had to eat. If it was dry stuff it wouldn't take long for a fellow to clean out his jug of wine.

PS: What about competition? You mentioned that in some cases there were Finns and Italians living together and then you got the English, Welch rather. So you've got two and sometimes three nationalities living together and you've also got the regional differences within Italy itself. How did all of that move over here? What happened as far as the dynamics between the

DS: How they got here to start with?

PS: No as far as the guys, you know, do they get along, was there a lot of competition.

DS: In the first place, the Fins didn't know any more than the Italians, you know, as far as the English went, there was just as difficult to learn, they only words that they learned as they say, were the bad words. The cuss words that went with the, you know, they were working in the mine and one did something to put stress or strain on the other fellow you know they would call each other these names as they began to learn the language. I never sensed any real rivalery. Cooperation, admiration, I do remember this, sometimes seemed to born out because, see I went to school to the seminary from the beginning of the ninth grade to twelveth. In Negaunee where we lived, there was our house, my uncle Amadao's house and the third were the Rinaldies. Then there was a big field that presumes as kind of a dump. And up Boyer Avenue there were twelve homes and mine was right behind. The language, as far as the language went, they all progressed about the same time. Those who came in the early days from 1902 were the big days, My father came because he had an uncle over here who went back and told him what it was like so he signed up to come but the uncle never came back. It seems that the same thing, one guy settled and then started bring in the others. My dad worked so they had enough to send back and get Amadao. When Amadao worked, then there were two working and then they sent back for two more. That would be uncle Henry and uncle Louie. Uncle Louie went back and got married with the intention of coming back and got sick and within a couple years never did come back, he died young. And then they started bring in people from their own villages that's why you find them. The settled in the Negaunee area, and some of the Peedmonts came up in Ishpeming. That's where some other you had the Sasilians, and the Colibrasy. All that same process. One guy got involved and started bring over and helping each other till they brought over half a community. And in their rivalries, their competitions and what not the Italians were the most bagarious, that's because of their Sundays together. But the finns never could get interested in the boachy game I don't know what they did except maybe to hunt, fish, or spend the day taking saunas.

PS: Well I've talked to one lady over in Ironwood who said that around Wakefield they do a lot of baseball. So I guess that's their version of

DS: Not in Negaunee. In Negaunee they were more woods men and campers and they were the ones who started building these camps out in the woods down in Guinn area, Shak lake and in that area and then they'd spend the days in and out of the sauna on the weekends. And even in the winter time, they'd chop a whole in the ice run out boiling hot and jump in. I said no, no. I tried the sauna a couple of times. Not for me. There is one in the

house back here. They put it up and they used it I think about three times over there and I haven't seen that smokestack go in the last five years.

PS: What about the language, did they speak Italian in the boarding house?

DS: yes

PS: So they weren't really practicing English, they weren't working on that.

DS: They weren't working to learn the language, they learned the language in the lunch room and in the shower at the mines. That's where they picked up the language. Very few, and of course I can't vouch for this, but very few went to anything like a night school. Later in the 20s when they started sending for girlfriends or went home, got married and came back, that was when they were starting these night schools. And they went to evening night school a little bit. But otherwise they just picked up the language hearing it and translating it into Italian to see what it sounded like, and then remembered phrase by phrase. My mother and my dad, my dad always read the Italian newspaper. I think he could read the headlines in print in the local paper in the mining journals. But my mother, I think I was in about sixth grade when they finally subscribed to the paper, and she learned to read, write English self taught or tutored to me, cause I was learning, she was learning from the reader I had and things of that sort. And dad, he learned for ma then, cause as a foreman he had to fill out reports every week, and between me reading it to him in grade school and, or mom in some instance reading the form, asking the question, what is the condition of the ladder way along side the shaft or something, we'd have to fill in good, very good, bad, needed repair, and things of that sort. In my high school years dad was doing his own and he learned to read that more because it was the same form sheets every week.

PS: What about Grandma?

DS: Grandma Truzogy

PS: You said that she never learned to read, but what about her English? Did she

DS: It grew along with theirs, you know, depending on the boarders. And of course with the two girls, Paul went into the Marines, and so after he came out from the Marines he started work, and three or four of the single men had a boarding house and a couple of them got involved in the bootlegging business. The job of not selling it, but making it for the guy who was selling it. So this was what one would say a second job. The

miner and then the still watcher, I guess would be a good word, cause it was boiling down the mash. Most of them became a profession in understanding it, the English. There were no good speakers in English, they all spoke with an accent, and sometimes they didn't have the tenses down, you know, present, past or future. But they all got along well enough, but in the boarding house it was a constant chatter of either Bear Conosto or Tim Otazie, they got along together and they understood each other, and for some reason or other they even paired off as partners. They pretty well dominated in the Negaunee mine area, the Negaunee mine, the Athens and the Moss mines. Other mines that were in the area didn't last like the Mary Charlette, the Nequee mine, and those mines were a different company operation and they folded as production costs climbed.

PS: There is one last thing that I wanted to ask you about. I've run across a reference to a man who, well by this time would be about 100 years old, so I imagine, probably gone, but he lived in the Hancock area and they referred to him as the boarding boss, that he ran a big boarding house, he was an Italian. He is referred to on one of the other tapes in the project that Managhi did, have you ever come across him, or anything about?

DS: No, those are all gone within the last ten years. The Copper Country was heavily inhabited by Italians, especially up in the city of Calumet, not in Houtgon, Hancock, most of them were in Lorium and Calumet, and the families there that I know through the Club operation were Cezear Cappo, his son is pastor at the cathedral now in Ishpeming, but he and his father's father and his mother both did the father about twenty some years, maybe twenty-five years the mother just last year. And I'm not aware that the Cappo's ran a boarding house. But he was kind of the boss man up there, having learned the language in South Range and the Atlantic mine in Calumet and Lorium. Then there was a, one of the signs of old age is showing with me, too, I'm trying to think of the names. He was a real leader up there. Do you have any names that you can see if they light a light? Do you remember any thing?

PS: Well it was a bit indistinctive on the tape, something like Bassa or Passa or something like that.

DS: No, Bacco, that was in the Iron Mountain area with Ford, drew quite a few Italians who got five dollar a day wage in less than mine jobs where they had maybe ten, fifteen, twenty years to go. And of course working outside that was the attraction. Tinnetty, Paul Tinnetty, did you run into that name?

PS: Not yet, no.

DS: Well he's one.

PS: Well it was just a possibility that you might know who it is.

DS: If I can find the book then I'd see it right away. In the local area just buried the son who was 80 years old last week, Francis Marquetty. That name you must have run into. Now a days it is spelled tty instead of tti. They were the pioneer in this Italian area, but they were off of the Island of Porchica. And some off the main land originally. Paul Tinnetty and the word Toriano keeps coming into my mind and their a Negaunee family some name like that.

PS: I'll see what I can do to follow up on that, it was just a possibility.

DS: How long are you going to be here?

PS: I have to be home by the 23 of August.

DS: The for the first time were getting a chapter organized up in the Copper country, and their going to be on the 12th of September, and St. Pauls parish for the mass that's in but the assembly and the banquet is in the building, they call it with Michigan Tech. And this is where we will finally get an opening up there because they had active lodges up until, a few up until a couple years ago. And they folded, otherwise, my purpose in establishing them was to gather together the minute books and things of that sort. But they're all reluctant to let it go. So where does it go in the end? It goes to the dump, the fire, because whoever buys the house, kids, they don't know what's in these books. Oh, that's Italian and out it goes. We've been hollering and hollering since 1964 to get those books all in one place. We haven't have really great success in doing that. But with the tapes on the individual families that has taken, I think there is 200 and some of those tapes now.

PS: Well, I now it's a tremendous project. I understand you were the man who really started all this, and I think it's terrific. I found out about the project only very recently and almost by accident, because I was researching mid-wives and came across Managhi's book and then it said in there about all of the tapes and that there were more materials and so forth. It was a topic rather than an ethnic group that I was interested in following up. But anyway, it's brought me up here, and I think it's just a tremendous project. And I'm so glad that this kind of thing is going on. I know what you mean about things being lost.

DS: I just want to show that something that I didn't point sugar bowl.

PS: That is cute. Let me end this tape now and thank you very much for your time.

DS: That's no problem, time. I've got plenty of it.