

PAUL ALTABELLO

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Paulie Altobello, Ishpeming Michigan, November second, 1995. Paulie, would you tell me when you were born?

PAUL: The year?

I: Yeah, the year.

P: May 1913.

I: In May?

P: In May. Eighth.

I: May Eighth, 1913. Okay. And where did you grow up?

P: In Ishpeming.

I: In Ishpeming? Could you tell us a little about the Italians in Ishpeming back when you were growing up?

P: Well... What do you mean?

I: Just what was life like in your home? What was it like growing up in the community that way? Just things you remember.

P: We ate heavy.

I: Birds?

P: No, we never had no birds. No, just regular old Italian way. Sundays you know you were gonna have spaghetti. Thursday you were gonna have beans. Once in a while, you'd get a pasty.

I: Uh huh. Now did your mother make pasties?

P: Yeah. For an old Italian she could make good pasties.

I: Did you have a regular... what did you have on Mondays usually?

P: Usually we'd have every day... the same thing every week. Like beans. On Sunday you know you were gonna have spaghetti. Spaghetti and meatballs. And pepperoni.

You have pepperoni in spaghetti?

I: Uh huh.

P: It's like I say.

I: No, it's good. And then so each day of the week you had some-

P: You could always tell what you were gonna have.

I: Uh huh, and on friday you had-

P: Friday we had, oh yeah, no meat there.

I: Yeah, what did you have? What kind of fish would they have?

P: Not too many, we had, we had what they called- this is codfish- [Italian]. Codfish, and then for fish, lot of times we were on Lent. My uncle, he lived in Chicago, he used to send us eel. They looked like a snake, but they were good; it was all white meat. And then once in a while I supposed when he packed the fish, he threw in a couple of clams. The clams are still living. That eel was good, but a lot of them couldn't take it because it looked just like a snake. But they were good. All white meat, nice and soft. Then they used to either fry it, bake it, or something like that. Then a lot of eggs. Another thing they used to have, you wouldn't like too much, is baked bread- cooked bread. The Italians, when they made a loaf of bread, they made it right for the oven, as big as the oven. 'Course, it was good the first two days, but after that it started to get hard. So they used to boil it- boiled bread on fridays, and then they'd season it with salt and pepper, and oil if you wanted. We didn't like that, but we ate it anyway. She used to soften up the bread. So, I can take it.

I: Was that the main meal then? Was that what you ate on Friday?

P: Yeah! It's all one meal, one thing a day, you didn't have no potatoes or this or that.

I: So you'd have- sometimes you'd have fish, [Italian]-

P: Fish.

I: And sometimes you'd have bread?

P: See this [Italian] it's just like codfish, but it was flat. [Unintelligible] in big pieces, and you soaked it overnight, and then you make a salad out of it. You put olive oil or garlic or whatever. Yeah, that wasn't too bad.

I: Yeah, but the bread wasn't too bad either?

P: No, the bread...

I: Did you celebrate in your home any special days or anything?

P: Didn't know half the time when our birthday was. No, we never...

I: What did your dad do?

P: He worked in the mine.

I: Which mine?

P: Sixteen it's called, right here. Of course it's closed now.

I: Now was this whole area that we're at here, was this a mining area?

P: I was just telling Tom, years ago there was an old lake here. When they shut down Sixteen, Section Sixteen they call it, the water started to come. Years ago, underground, they always had a pump to pump the water out. That's the same thing from Lake Angeline here going through the junction, there's still a lake there, ain't there?

I: Yeah.

P: Now see that was all dry land. When they shut that mine down, Holmes Mine it was called, water started to come up. The same thing now the shaft, there's water in their shaft- that's hard ore mine, that's good hematite that come in. And over there, Tommy says there's still a couple of brick buildings- they're not brick, but- standing, they're there. The engine house used to be there. The cage used to come down here someplace here. Seen that?

I: So this was an underground mine?

P: Yeah. I don't know how far the mine is now, but I mean there was no water there when we were really young. We used to come over and pick berries.

I: So this was like a valley?

P: Just a valley.

I: Beautiful gardens? [unintelligible]

P: Yeah. In fact here, there's beautiful ground- earth- for planting. Plant put in rain it'll grow. Then they figure all the moonshine they could make by planting gardens, I guess.

I: Could you talk a little about that- making moonshine?

P: Well I never made or hung around with bootleggers' kids, but I never drank- that's why they couldn't figure that out. I never drank. I mean, I tasted it, but yeah. There used to be a lot of fun- we used to see a Buick or a Chrysler in town, we'd run after it cause we knew they were gonna raid someplace. They're the only ones that had a big car. One time we were- I'll start, you can put that together. My wife and I were in a show one night, and a guy was sitting- I know the guy, he was a neighbor- before you know there was some guy came over and he bent over and whispers something in his ear and we never see that guy for three or four months. They were raiding his house and he was in Chicago. When I was telling it, on the corner there, don't mention no names, it's called

Stagg's building over there, used to be a shoemaker. Not Dominic [unintelligible], another shoemaker. But the shoemaker he had was just a look-over. So he was there one day and all of a sudden his wife comes running, said something to him, he told his wife to go home. State police and sheriff came. This shoemaker- he shot them through the door. He got him in the arm and he ran away. I better not mention any names. So the smartest cop on Ishpeming force knew where he was, so he went to talk to him to come back, otherwise it'd be harder for him. So he came back. He only got 5 years for shooting him in the arm.

I: He was a bootlegger?

P: Yeah.

I: That's why they-

P: See a lot of them never made the moon, they sold it or they bought it wholesale. But I went to a place not far from where I lived- you could swear that they were allowed to make it- 3 or 4 barrels and a big still right in the middle, right in the kitchen. See they used to make a still, years ago, out of- I don't know if you can remember it- copper boiler. You remember they used to boil clothes?

I: Yeah.

P: And this guy here he had a still made in Chicago. It just showed his own snuffy smith. So that was the moonshine days. We used to like- and then on Sunday morning, you could see a bunch of kids going through the alleys picking up empty bottles and they sold them back to the bootleggers. That's the only way the poor kids could have any money. It was 3 cents for a half a pint bottle and a nickel I guess for a pint. That was expensive in the old days.

I: What about the cab drivers? Ronnie?

P: What?

I: Did they pick you up in the cab, too?

P: [Unintelligible] Of course there was two taxi drivers in town, I mean not two, one was the Cerullos- I better shut up.

I: [unintelligible]

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Cab drivers.

P: Well anyway, he used to have a nice Chrysler car, and these kids- we were about 12, 13. "Wanna go for a ride?" And that's when we'd jump in the car, we'd never had a ride before. A couple would get in the front with him, couple in the backseat, take a ride towards Negaunee-Marquette, and moonshine under the seat and moonshine in the trunk. He delivered it. And he used to tell us now if anyone's on the corner, just wave to them. See, I think one time you had to pick somebody up if you were empty- the taxi- you couldn't pass them up. So that's why the driver used to want us in the back.

I: Oh so he had all the kids-

P: Yeah he had all the passengers. That's what they say anyway. Years ago, you couldn't record it or something. A lot of times you'd see a lot of them on the hospital corner, standing looking to be picked up- "hey, you kids wave" We'd wave, we don't know what for. And the same things in North Lake, they made everything they can make. They always used to say even the horses got [unintelligible] before they got home. The cows used to like that mash. And one guy from North Lake, he went away to be a state police. And when he came back, when he was through school- I knew him good, I take two of his sisters, one sister lives here yet, and one lives in North Lake, I

think she's still living- so before they put him in the station, the state police, they gave him a couple of weeks off to come home. And in North Lake they had that clubhouse, I guess they use that for church now, don't they?

I: Apartments.

P: So a couple of guys were in the clubhouse- they kept it up, [unintelligible] ran the clubhouse. Soon as somebody sees a cop in North Lake they all run home, unload the mash. So they figured they'd never raid North Lake because they were orphans, and all the people were good to them.

I: So now- [microphone cuts out]

P: Right, the Finns, there were a lot of Finns, we were all mixed.

I: But most of the people were Finns and Italians?

P: Yeah. A lot of them were Finns, I mean. They all used to be Joders up there, and Baldinis, something like that.

I: Is that the Baldini that's in Marquette? Tom Baldini?

P: I don't know if he's related or not.

UV: He's from Negaunee.

I: Negaunee?

UV: Easier location.

P: Yeah.

I: Now Tom was saying that you used to go up to North Lake to deliver?

P: Yeah, groceries. I worked for a big store there in missionary but the store's closed now. First hooked up to a team of horses. Then we- yeah, they used to deliver. Then sometimes the drivers used to like to drink. It's a good thing they had horses. The last customer, the driver was so drunk, the last customer lay him in the wagon or sleigh put the tarpaulin over him, he tied the lines on the seat to make sure- he say giddyup, and they all come to the store. The horses didn't know. 'Course the cars, there weren't many, so the horses used to come. I used to work with the store off and on the first time. We unload the rig there and if the store never [unintelligible]. The driver and the horses in the barn, we used to let him sleep in the hay till about 5:30 and then we'd wake him up and tell him to go home. But do you know how honest the people were in North Lake? I mean, that guy on Beatty(sp?), he was never short a penny when they pay him. Lot of those people didn't even know where the hell the store was from North Lake. That's a fact. They never went up. The only time they ever got a ride to town was if they bummed a ride with the teamster. I was sitting down one day on a porch talking to a guy- he said I can tell you when that woman's gonna turn. I looked- I said suppose you didn't. I said she's gonna have her wine now. I don't wanna mention any names.

I: No.

P: Beauchamp's wife was a CCI.

[unintelligible]

P: Yeah. One day there was a fire at one of the houses at North Lake. Next day I went up there and said the fire, yeah, I said how come? She started to laugh, said I hate to tell ya, it was my dad. He was so drunk that he fell and stayed on the floor, he took the Christmas tree with him. By the time they got up, the stuff on the tree was burning. See they used to put paper stuff that you make in school and candles. They even used to put candles years ago on the... yeah. I was wondering how come I could only see two

feet just sticking out of the front room. No matter where he fell, he'd lay and fall asleep, oh man.

I: Now was he burned?

P: The tree, yeah, the firetruck, the firemen, were up there.

I: But it didn't burn him?

P: No no. You could almost tell, if you went to North Lake at 12:00, or 5 to, you could almost tell the time because everybody used to come out of the clubhouse and go and eat. Then they go back home. Yeah, that was a nice location. Like Tommy said, they had to put a sign up in the sky so the birds would go around, or they used to shoot any kind of bird, that's a fact. I don't know what they did with them, those old Italians. I don't know if they cleaned them or ate the feathers and all or what. But you wouldn't know...

I: Oh yeah, no no no.

P: No you wouldn't remember there's the Calabrese, that's the ones that mostly, we always rise about making the Moonshine. Then there's the [Italian], or whatever it is, then there's [Italian], I always tell them it weren't a good day cause I said "you spoiled it for us." Sure, and you see some places in Italy that even across the street- the dialect is different, I don't know if that's true or not. But Dr. Tusa when he went to Italy, he was disappointed in Italy. He came back a week ahead of time, I don't know why. Course he was fussy anyway. He was a Calabrese and was he a Calabrese. What are you?

I: A Lombardi. North.

P: North. See they call us north too, we're on top of the...

I: Above...

P: I remember snowball [unintelligible] calling it gangster. I used to tell he come from the heel.

I: Brindisi over there?

P: Who?

I: The heel. Brindisi, it's the city over there. [unintelligible]

P: That's where all the gangsters are.

I: Sicily?

P: Sicily.

I: Sicily, yeah. The other part. So do you have any other stories about delivering up in North Lake?

P: No, they were all-

I: Things that sort of happened to you when you were up there?

UV: How about Junction?

P: Junction... There were gangsters there, too, I mean.

I: [Unintelligible] the cake.

P: What?

I: When you talked about the cake, you got a cake in the oven?

P: Well that was French.

I: You can speak a little of that?

P: Well a lot of the French, they talk like you and me. So one day I delivered, the woman met me at the door, she said "Paulie, don't you close that door hard, me?" She said "I got a cake in the oven, me." They'd meet you by the door sometimes. I'd sell pork to Frenchmen. They always ordered pork. All fat, they wanted.

I: Now were they up in North Lake then, the French?

P: No, in Junction- not far from here.

I: I see. And then up in North Lake, so there weren't any stores up there?

P: There was one, but he never had no fresh meat, he just had [unintelligible] sometimes in the grocery store. He was a Jew. Casper, his name was.

I: And was that the only store?

P: That's the only store they had. The town for the Diorite only had one store. You don't go that far, that's way back. So... everybody handled moonshine I think, those days.

I: You mean all these grocery stores?

P: Yeah, I mean small ones.

I: So they really weren't in to... I mean, the people waited for you to come delivering, or put the order in, and deliver it to them.

P: Sometimes there was... One time there was only one phone in North Lake, that was the clubhouse. They used to line up sometimes to call up the store, we'd take the order today and deliver it tomorrow. And we had a slaughterhouse too, the store I worked. Soon as the old timers seen a cow come in, they all run in, they all want tripe. I don't know, tripe.. You put lots of salt and lots of pepper to taste, I mean I don't know what they did with it but they ate it anyway.

I: Stew, I think. Soup.

P: Soup, maybe.

I: Soup or stew. Now what was the name of the store that you worked for?

P: Lefer's.

I: Lefer's?

P: Lefer's. It used to be Lofer's. The old man that first started the store was really a German, come right from Germany. But then when he come here, he wanted a change. He said, it doesn't sound very good, Lofer's. So he put a E there instead of the O. And he got a son still living here.

UV: Grandson. Paul, would be grandson.

P: It'd be the one that started the store.. Yeah. There's a lot of big stores in a town like that.

Rawley's carpet shop [unintelligible] Lefer's.

P: We had a slaughterhouse, a sausage factory, groceries, and meats.

I: All in the same-

P: All in the same store. And they lived upstairs. He was really a German. I know none of the kids are, but the guy I worked for, he said we come down at 7:30 in the morning the old man would say where the hell were you this morning? He said the old man had the cattle cut up. A real german, now.

I: Now did they- they sold in the store, but then they also delivered?

P: Yeah, there used to be lots of stores delivering. Had another store in town where, the gas station, not the gas station, where [unintelligible] started, the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Third. That was a big drugstore. That was a Finnish store called Cosby's. They had a teamster too, that used to- the horse come by itself. They used to deliver- they used to do the same thing. We used to see the horse come, no driver, go right back to the store.

I: So there were how many stores in Ishpeming that did that?

P: Pretty nearly every store years ago used to have delivery.

I: And then people would either order the day before or- and you'd deliver the next day?

P: Unless they had a phone they could call up. They tell me in North Lake they had a couple of phones in what they call a pipe- 5 lines. Someone would say get the hell off the phone, I want to call the fire department. If you had too many- but then at the end you had to have a private line or whatever you call it. Like I say, the phone would ring, you could hear all the clicks everybody picking up the phones. Your number would be maybe 2 rings, his would be 3 or 4. You had to listen for the rings. As soon as some would ring, everybody would go to the phone.

I: And then everybody could listen in?

UV: Party line.

P: Yeah, they had an open line then.

I: Oh my word.

P: Years ago, they still had what they called two lines or three lines. But your ring might have been 2 and his might've been 3. It ring 3, and he'd answer it. But you keep your mugs out of there, you know what I mean? Yeah the phones they were always open one time.

I: So you want to be careful.

P: Just like now when they show he go in there and phone, and the phone would ring in here, you could listen to what he's talking about. That was the same thing.

I: Party line.

P: Party line, yeah. Are you getting what you want?

I: Yeah! This is... just talk like you are.

UV: Tell him about the red lights. [unintelligible] Main Street.

P: On the main street. Well years ago see the cops- remember, they never had a cop car, so they used to put a red light- I gotta look, maybe that red light that was on a couple years ago is still on there. When somebody wanted the cop, the operator- they'd put on a red light, and the cop could go anyplace, pick up the phone, say what's the trouble? The telephone operator would tell them where to go. Cause the red light was on. One day I remember- I don't know if you know Beatrice [Italian], that was a good laugh that night. They come over to my house, Beatrice and Daddy- that was her husband's name. "Paulie- let's run, the red light is on!" We were always talking when the red light was on. Somebody called up that we were making too much noise or something. So Beatrice says what the heck are you two talking about? Daddy said the red light is on, that was always for us, we were hollering at somebody. He says I bet you if your kid Denny did something, you'd [unintelligible], I says I sure would. That one time though, we must have really heard a cop. It was in the wintertime. The cop used to use his car for a policeman's car. They only had one at that time. So one cop, he started to chase us, one kid- he was just gonna grab hold of the kid- you know what the kid did? He went down on his knees and the cop went right over him. He was so close to him. Poor cop stayed there, we don't know if he was playing that he was hurt, I think I said oh gee we better go, or that guy's gonna freeze, we don't know if he's fooling us, or just... One by his feet, one by his head, we moved this cop we knocked over- so we picked him up, put him on the snowbank so nobody run over him, we run like hell.

I: Why was the cop after you?

P: I don't know, somebody called them saying somebody's making noise. Cause we never swiped anything or anything.

I: Now did you belong to that- there was a club, Leonard told me about that club, in Ishpeming.

P: St. Rocco's?

I: No no, there was one from your home town, where the Altobellos came from.

P: That's... Tom!

UV: What?

P: What the heck was the name. I know who you mean. Paesano club, not the Paesano club.

I: No no.

P: I know what you mean.

I: This is a club back in the old days.

P: What's the [unintelligible] back at St. Rocco's?

UV: St. Anthony's.

P: St. Anthony.

I: No no, there was another one then, that the members were all from the town that your family was- it should be in there.

P: What the heck is that. I know who you mean. Napolidan!

I: That's the one, yeah. Did you belong to that?

P: No, I didn't.

I: No?

P: My brothers did and my Leonard did.

I: Oh.

P: I had a [unintelligible] too and he passed away.

I: Okay, that's the one. So you were the younger brother?

P: I was the baby of the family.

I: Okay. So how much older was Leonard then?

P: 5.

I: And he passed away how many years later?

I: About 5 or so?

P: At least 5.

I: I'm gonna write that down.

P: Did you know him?

I: Oh yeah. He was the one, Leonard- one time, back in 1981, Leonard and Monsignor Spalgotti came down to Northern and I met them and they said that they had money from the Paesano club to fund me doing interviews with you and so on, which I started doing back then and I'm still doing now, and this book is one of the results of that.

P: You gonna sell that now?

I: Well no, I've sold them all, we had about 1500, and they all sold out.

P: Well if you ever make any more, I'll buy one.

I: Oh! Thank you.

P: Yeah.

I: Yeah, so I'm the- we sit with people and I just kind of talk about the old times and what life was like and stuff in Ishpeming and Negaunee and so on.

P: I think Copper Country had a tough time with the moogly-en-do.

I: There's one place up there, Ramble Town, that was known for its whiskey in Chicago and if you went down to Chicago with a load of liquor and you said it was from Ramble

Town, you sold it top dollar. They wouldn't even taste it, as long as they knew it was from there, they'd sell it. It was good.

P: Here, one bootlegger- I don't know if you BSing the bootleggers- you'd say one was better than the other. Somebody would go in and they'd say, give me the one with the ribbon on it. That was supposed to be a better moonshine. Can I mention the name- no. He was more like, to people, a safe, but he was handy. Is that off?

I: No no, it's on.

P: What else you gonna talk about?

I: Any other story- [microphone cuts out]

UV: Now we're gonna need the one on tradition bearers, okay? Maybe you haven't seen it. I gotta show it to you sometime. terrific.

I: Now were there- who lived down in this area?

P: Well most of them were English people down here. Here are the Caesars, the old man was Italian, but she was French. That's Tommy's house here.

UV: Caesars in this house.

P: And then there was a [unintelligible] living over here, they could rent the [unintelligible]

UV: Yeah. Another gas station, [unintelligible].

P: Then there's a couple Irishmen over here. Frenchtown was- Junction- not Junction, Salisbury and them where a lot of the English people and Irishmen were there.

UV: Then there was Frenchtown.

P: That's up a little higher. But it's cool. When you cross the road, you go to Junction. There's a lot of Italians and Frenchmen there. And then from there you used to go to North Lake. I often think, they says you used to come all this way with a horse?

I: Then it's probably an all day trip.

P: Yeah, you leave in the morning, say- and the stores years ago, they open at 7:00, not 9, 10:00- until 6:00. Saturday night they close at 9. Then up on the hill we used to call it the big shots up there on Strawberry Hill, we used to call it.

I: Who lived up there?

P: Everybody, I guess.

I: Money? Big shots from the mine?

P: And then a couple of [unintelligible] families started to move up there. Them big shots didn't like it. [unintelligible] Up on the hill. Who else moved up that way?

UV: Andreaki's up there. [Unintelligible] on that corner store on [unintelligible].

P: Yeah.

UV: Tell them about the Irish over at the West End that we- the one who you caught was teacher's aide-

P: Yeah.

UV: [unintelligible]

P: We had the centennial one year. In the coffee shop, there's always a beer garden. And the house with the beer garden put a big pike up with a big sign- "Welcome to Little Italy" and there was a couple Irish families on that side. They wouldn't go under the sign, they'd walk in the road. They were really Irishmen.

I: Now was this-

P: Right there on Division Street.

UV: Division Street.

I: Right in town?

P: Yeah. She never cross the street, she'd never run onto the street, she'd rather go out in the road when they come around.

I: In general, how did the people get along with each other?

P: Not too bad. Had a couple fights with the younger kids, I mean, not for nationality or anything, just fight.

I: So you didn't have a lot of tension and fighting among the various nationalities?

P: No, no. Couple of old ladies used to fight, I don't know what they used to fight about. Swearing at each other, I don't know.

I: You mean like an Italian and a Finn?

P: Something like that. Or sometimes two Italians.

I: Two Italians.

P: Used to be two Italians there, but one lived across the street- they both had windows on the same side they'd get madder than hell at each other and they'd start cocking, fighting, arguing like hell, I don't know about what.

I: Now where did- no, go ahead.

P: [unintelligible], they always used to watch people come in on the tracks, old Italian ladies carrying railroad ties on their head. When they fix the railroad tracks, they'd take the old tie out, and they cut it up for wood. Everybody used to watch them coming out of the fire hall yard there. Got big ties right on their head!

I: One, or no- just one?

P: One, one, yeah. One. Then some would come around the alley with a bushel on their head. I tried it one day, you carry it alright, but you [unintelligible]

UV: [unintelligible]

P: Did anybody get shot? A coupla boys, you ever hear that? Used to be a big beer garden just on the- I'll tell you the street, Grove Street. There was a big fight there one night. One guy got stabbed, and one guy got his throat cut and died, I mean killed. We used to call it the bucket of blood. Nobody bought that building for years. Right in the floor, all the blood was still there. I could [unintelligible]. At the end somebody bought it and it ended up that guy, the same guy that shot the State Police. So he cleaned it up- and you know the old Italians, somebody died there, that was no good anymore, something like that.

I: So they just moved out of the building?

P: They just moved, [unintelligible] already got a nonprofit, I think. No, when beer came out, this guy that shot the State Police, he bought it, and couldn't get out.

I: But the Italians just-

P: No, no, there wasn't Italians there, [unintelligible]

I: But who owned it when this happened? Italians?

P: I don't know now, I think a Betucci owned it. Pretty sure. That's who was in the place before. One Betucci killed other one. You ain't getting any-

I: We'll keep that out.

[Unintelligible]

UV: They'd cut his throat.

I: Do you remember the Valala family?

P: The who?

I: The Valalas?

P: Valala? Yeah, there's quite a few Valalas in old town. There's one that lives right up the hill here. Joe.

I: Yeah, down in town. And his father Frank-

UV: Frank.

I: Frank lived next door.

UV: Yeah.

I: Till 95 or something.

P: He died though.

UV: Yeah, Frank did.

I: So you didn't belong to any of these Italian clubs and whatnot?

UV: Tell him why. He blabbed on them.

P: No, I-

I: Okay.

P: One day, I worked in the store off an on, it was- can I say the name? No.

I: [word?] It's up to you.

P: A guy come in, wanting to know if I'd join the club. I looked up, I know he didn't like that word. I said you gotta be a little paler don't you? He said what are you-hoos in? That was the end of that. Nobody ever asked me since to join certain [unintelligible] clubs.

I: So you were young enough so you weren't really that interested in the Italian clubs?

P: No. A lot of the younger ones never joined. But they were all old- I don't know why, I told Tommy that, St.Rocco's Society had a warning once. It ain't more fighting after he leapt across the Lodge. They used to bid to carry St. Rocco's flag. The last time I guess was 15, 20 bucks. That was lots of money those days. So they started- we could even hear them from here when the windows were open at the upstairs at the top of the school. And they had a warning- one more fight or one more cop coming here and you gotta bust up the Lodge. They were always fighting about something. Didn't take long.

I: And they would fight over who was gonna carry the flag?

P: And there's something else that started it, anything.

I: Getting back to the St. Rocco's society, where did they used to meet?

P: Upstairs the old convent- they had a school there.

I: You're saying they were in the school meeting and you were outside listening to them-

P: Hollering, yeah.

P: You could hear when they opened up the windows.

I: Now, did you speak Italian at home?

P: Yeah. I did when my parents were living with me. We talked pretty good English.

I: Yeah. But you also spoke Italian?

P: Yeah.

I: But even yourself as the youngest child spoke Italian?

P: Yeah.

I: Sometimes the youngest in the family doesn't speak- you get down to that end and the younger ones don't speak it and the old ones do.

P: A lot of times I had to ask an old timer "how do you say this" and "how do you say that."

I: Can you still speak it?

P: I could understand pretty good.

I: Speak it?

P: I can speak a little bit.

I: Probably if you had some practice.

P: Yeah. The only ones I know that keep right up there is the Finns.

UV: And that's [unintelligible] lots.

I: And that's [unintelligible] lots.

UV: Tell him about that time when you had Frankie, they had to- I don't know if you want- the two by four.

P: That one was with the old man. The fathers really went after the kids if they don't behave. I was telling him one day I was delivering with a horse and one of the kids came with me and- we used to park the horse in the alley if the roads were getting [unintelligible] or something. Kid came up to his home, he says "there's my old man on the other side." I say what's the matter? He says I was supposed to help him. So Frankie, the kid's name was Frankie, he got off of the rig and the old man just happened to catch him. He hollered to him. When the kid got up close to the old man the old man picked up a 2x4 he was working on and hit him right in the back. [unintelligible] The old times happenings, they were the boss.

I: Do you remember when you were growing up, [unintelligible], do you ever remember the KKK, the Klu Klux Klan? Could you talk a little about that?

P: No, they only used to have a parade once in a while. You never knew- years ago a lot of them used to say there's a barber in town that was a KKK, you couldn't prove- they always had a mask on when they...

I: When they marched?

P: When they marched.

I: But they did march?

P: Yeah.

I: You remember that?

P: Yeah, I can remember.

I: But not for a real long time, just for-

P: Then they used to burn the cross right down on this hill over here. They used to burn the cross, the Klu Klux. I can remember them. They used to march off and on. They always said most of them were old Finns so you couldn't- they always had a mask on. One guy, I remember there was a parade going down on Division street, and one guy hollered to the leader, he said "If you're American citizens, please show your face." The guy come up to him but he didn't say nothing. I just think the guy would have shot him if he said anything. He was right though, that guy. If you're American, show your face if you want to carry the American flag. Yeah they used to parade here often.

I: And so the people thought they were Finns?

P: No, they figured that- they used to have a club here, another club, the house called the Culmination Hall. They said a lot of those belonged to them so nobody knows, couldn't see their face. The last time the Klu Klux Klan marched, they marched in Negaunee. That's the last time, up there on the highway someplace.

I: But way back, years and years ago?

P: Oh yea, in the 30s, 29, end of 20s. But I seen in the paper not too long ago they marched here someplace in Detroit.

I: Yeah, Lansing.

P: Lansing, yeah.

I: There's some down there. I guess at one time they were very active all through the Upper Peninsula. Back in the 20s, though. After the late 20s I think they died.

P: I guess a couple of blacks got shot or something and they blamed it on them or something, but I don't know. Never read up on them, so.

I: What did they Italians and the immigrants think when they had the burning, when they burned the crosses?

P: You couldn't do nothing. You don't know who burned it, and [unintelligible] around, they tell me when they burnt the last one up here, in Salisbury, a couple of guys went up but they couldn't find nobody. You could see that cross from way downtown. It'd be the second hill, or it'd be this one. One of these hills, anyway.

I: So they did it often?

P: Yeah, they said they used to burn a cross after they got so many members, something like that.

I: Did you ever hear of them threatening people and so on?

P: No, they were kind of quiet to themselves, but the only thing I can remember is burning the cross on top of that hill over there someplace. Somebody said that after they get so many members they used to burn the cross.

I: So it wasn't to strike fear into the immigrants?

P: I don't know. [unintelligible]

I: That's interesting. Any other stories you want to finish up here?

P: No, I don't know.

I: Do you have any things you want to remind him of?

UV: I can't- I'm trying to think, they have a tape clear at the store [unintelligible]

P: Just like when you're on the phone with your daughter or son- you hang up the phone, you go "what the hell, I forgot to tell her this." We call our daughter once in a while and after I hang up, "I should've told her that." Next time.

I: You have to make a list before you call.

P: Yeah, that's good.

[microphone cuts out]

I: Used to have a court.

P: That's up to copper country.

UV: They used to have a court or something?

P: Yeah, like in Marquette, they used to have what they called the Highest Court in Houghton.

I: A federal court?

P: Yeah, like in Marquette. So there was something in town about a store or something. So they had to go up there to the judge and brought his lawyer up there. The guy got up, he says "what do you say about it?" I don't know, that's on me. So he said "[unintelligible] died, and he cannot be here today. He died last night." He's supposed to be a witness. Course when I say the name it sounds better. They see miners, and it was in the papers not too long ago about Ishpeming, about years ago when the lumberjacks and the miners didn't get paid on Saturday. They said "it was a quiet day in Ishpeming on Saturday night, no fighting, no gunning, or no knifing." They say Copper Country is a dandy fun for lumberjacks. I suppose the oil.

I: Was there on weekends, on Saturday, did things really pick up?

P: Yeah, Saturdays and Sundays- everybody went visiting on Saturday and Sunday night. There was where Roosevelt is now a regular saloon. That's a new- not new, but it's new now. As kids go by, you couldn't even see the inside from the smoke, just like they show on the show once in a while. Everybody's smoking, you open up the door and the big whoof of smoke come out. They said years ago when you bought a whiskey you had to buy a keg, they used to come in kegs, and the guy used to have glasses and keg on the windowsill or whatever it was, and you couldn't see inside from the smoke. They had regular doors outside, where they used to put the whiskey down in the basement. Well-

I: Okay?

P: Talking to me- [unintelligible]

P: When you want the door we'll call you back.

I: Yeah, it's gonna be the same thing. Okay, thank you.

-----END TRANSCRIPTION-----