

INTERVIEW WITH MAX MUELLE  
JUNE 23, 1994  
NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS  
MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

RM: Max, could you give us a little of your background, how you and your family got involved with Northern in the past?

MM: Well, I was hired here at Northern as the first - the head of grounds maintenance. It was a position that was held - a joint position - buildings and grounds prior to my coming here. Frank Schwemin (? spelling), of course, was head of buildings and grounds, which also came under his jurisdiction - the heating plant and the whole works of it. In other words, you have one person that took care of all this work. Northern in 1965, of course, was growing - growing fast. There was new facilities - they needed someone with the expertise experience and so on to head up the department - to take care of the new plantings and etc, etc. This evolved also into snow removal, all maintenance of walks, and streets, and so on, what-have-you; parking lots, and bus transportation. So this started in 1965 and I literally built the department with, I thinking of - we have four - I think it was four full time employees at that time. There was really no leadership there - there was none available. So then we got into building a department and giving plans and schedules and such. Doing more plantings and upgrading the grounds and so on.

In going back even prior to this - some years back - and I have to think in the early 30's my father was involved in some work out along Presque Isle Avenue - by Kaye Hall, and with the senior class in doing the planting at the walk entrance down the corner of Waldo and Presque Isle Avenue.

RM: What was your father's name?

MM: My father's name was Hugo and he was in - of course he started as a nursery - small nursery and landscape service - the landscape service coming first, of course.

RM: In Marquette?

MM: In Marquette, yes. So, as far as our family is concerned that was the first contact or work done at Northern. As far as myself is concerned, I did -

RM: Could we go back to mention before we got on tape, the entry gateway at the corner of Presque Isle and Waldo, could you talk about that again.

MM: Well, this was an entry, if you will, it was constructed - and



then I have to try to recall just it amounted to. \_\_\_\_\_  
 entry way it was built of flagstone, it came from the quarry down

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by the prison, it was a very good class of flagstone; and there were plantings put in there. I'd have to think awfully hard - it was probably some masonry work that was built up with the flagstone, probably, three or four feet high - on either side of the walk that came from the municipal walk Presque Isle Avenue that lead up to the university, which the old walk has been filled - if you remember the stairway that came down and, it seems to me, they just filled that in here the past year. And, that was the main walk from that direction there.

Now, the senior graduating class - the senior class of that year, they raised the money, and pretty much donated their time - the labor to do these plantings and such. And, I do expect that there was a mason that was hired or donated his work - I don't know at this time - to do the masonry work on this flagstone.

SO this is something back then the senior classes would leave something as a remembrance of their class \_\_\_\_\_.

RM: Could this be something like a gateway like you're saying - could it also be just flowers - just some kind of a planting or was it more permanent?

MM: Well, they looked, I guess, more then at permanent things. This was a permanent structure there. In fact, since I've been here the plantings were taken out the balance of them - I don't know if we have one tree down there left or not - I'll have to check that and see. But, most of that was removed when that parking lot - the infamous parking lot was put in there. Parking lots are nice but they also destroy a lot. Sometimes construction involved destruction - most cases it does.

As far as my background is concerned, I grew up in the horticultural field - growing shrubs, trees, and so on, and, of course, in the landscape business some years before I came to Northern. So I was experienced in various of works \_\_\_\_\_, equipment operation, and so on. I was hired by Leo VanTassel (? spelling) and this was July 1, 1965. Now I remained head of the grounds and maintenance department for some twenty-two and a half years, if I recall correctly, until such time when the department operations and maintenance departments, physical plant department was reorganized. And at that time I was transferred to a newly created position in the physical plant department - engineering planning. My position was facility specialist. I was then in charge of - there again going back to construction, replacement of \_\_\_\_\_ and so on - I was in charge of transplanting, landscape plans, any improvements outside, walk



replacements, \_\_\_\_\_ specifications, and taking it from beginning to end - from its inception to its completion. So I then stay in that position until 1992, which for a total, I guess, is 27 1/2 years. I did enjoy it and after that long you feel this is home and I'm very interested in what goes on here. I'm not always

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satisfied with what goes on here so you get pretty much entrenched in your place of employment. If the interest is there, it never dies.

RM: During your time, this position, was there any kind of a master plan that you followed for planting and improving the campus - anything like that?

MM: There were several plans made, one was made by \_\_\_\_\_ and this was when Edgar Harden was president. Another one by \_\_\_\_\_ Clark, I believe. Neither one of these plans were followed. We pretty much, as funding was available, we pretty much developed areas on campus and trying to keep in mind what the future might bring for those areas, as far as plantings were concerned, walks where they were need, and so on. The master plan - no - there was no plan that was really followed. Although as far as planting trees we did have one for tree planting, yes, on campus. But, as far as the planting for future development, we didn't really have a good plan. We had one that showed would be building sites - where, say, inside the circle drive. In fact, none of these building have been put in - the three buildings inside Jamerich Hall, the Science Building, and the Learning Resources building were the three. And, of course, there was room for a couple more buildings in there which never did come \_\_\_\_\_.

RM: Going back to what were the details about a public garden, a vegetable garden that was located behind the Birds Eye Building. I remember back in the 70's.

MM: I think this was probably in the 80's - time flies - I think you're correct - late 70's. There's a group of people, primarily married students on campus, that wanted a vegetable garden so we did, in fact, eradicate the existing vegetation and till in the area for the people down there to work on. This continued - this is behind the Bird's Eye Building - this continued for maybe two or three years. Some gardens were quite successful and others found out that the weeds grow fast, and the plants wouldn't keep, and they were inundated with other growth. But, we had one person that got involved, and he was not on campus, this was open really to the community - and this person was signing on for quite a few of the plots and kind of having control. With things like this going on we decided the next year we would discontinue this operation. And, of course, in mind we were going to make this area in a campus



nursery - tree nursery, which was really the reason we discontinued the garden plots. We then - we never could get enough money budgeted to get into a planting program on campus - it was very costly and if we got, say, \$10,000 this was a lot of money. Occasionally - not annually - occasionally you would get some money and this would not cover very much plant material. If you'd look the size of this campus, the trees were all destroyed, for the most part when it was built - at least the later part, and it needed to

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be planted. So what we did, we took this area - and this was the dump-all from the Bird's Eye - the \_\_\_\_\_ plant and with the help of Michigan Youth Corp - and we're looking at a three year period - the Youth Corp went through with our machinery and we cleaned, and cleaned, and cleaned, and with the hand labor there, and I think we had probably 10 or 12 of these youth corp workers. So we did clean up the area and got the unwanted growth out of there and, Lord, there was metal, and there was wood, and logs and masonry. You name it - it was in there - so many, many, many loads were hauled out. The soil was very, very poor. So then what we did was we took the sawdust pile that was partially decomposed in the back and we spread this over the area. We levelled out the area first and spread out the sawdust and incorporated this into the soil, adding nitrogen to complete the decomposition. So this is the beginning of the nursery plot and we did haul in leaves, compost from the city of Marquette, and sludge from the guy, whatever and we built up a fairly decent soil down there. Then we - we started off purchasing out lining out grade - what we call lining out-grade trees from a nursery in Oregon which the best ones come from, incidently. So we started out flowering crabapples, many types of deciduous trees, different maples and what have you. We also, I would go up to a couple of chain stores at the end of the season, they would have some plant materials left over that I would bargain for and I would get them at about 10 cents on a dollar. So we would plant those on the nursery and so many of those grow into such beautiful trees. I would think that at the peak the nursery would have probably have a value of between 30 and 40 thousand dollars worth of nursery \_\_\_\_\_. Now as it grows, of course, it increases in value and so much have been planted out on campus. As far as the white pines are concerned, we planted between 3 and 4 hundred at least. And these we had inspected by the Michigan Department of Agriculture - as the law requires, and these we got from the Elder Agency on their property on the Fish Hatchery Road. They had a lot of pines coming up there and it was sort of conducive to getting a nice \_\_\_\_\_, so we dug all of those down there - they gave them to us as a donation. This we did with the Youth Corp again, and we planted those out in the nursery. Of course, they are around campus now - some of them are around 15 - 16 feet. In another few years they'll make the place look so much different - bring it back to what it was years ago - the same type of trees. So anyway, where we picked

up all these different plants, and it was a very successful venture. The cost to Northern was very little. Again, probably 10 cents on a dollar for the whole part of it. We put in an irrigation system and so on. There was one thing that I was proud of in my tenure here.

RM: About what year did they put that nursery in and is it still in operation?

Mr: Or yeah, we had planted \_\_\_\_\_ and, of course, a lot needs to be moved. And, of course, we purchased a tree spade for digging. You dig the hole with it and then you dig the plant and you set it in the hole - it's called a nursery spade. It takes a 50 inch \_\_\_\_\_ so it's been very effective. That was probably one of the biggest costs in this whole operation. But, for spending say \$20,000 in the total over the years we have accomplished planting 50 to 60 thousand dollars worth of material. So it was very economical and very effective. Goes to show you, sometimes around here we did do things that turned out good.

RM: I was always impressed by seeing that nursery, not knowing too much about it, but just seeing that and I figured that we were saving money - that something was being done that way and now to hear the details - that's very good.

RM: Now, was there any - I tend to notice or noticed in the past - that in the 1930's, when Appleberry was here, was there some planting at that time. Or was it just my thought that was going on - you were just going with an on-going planting project.

Mr: We had - who was here then - we didn't get too many shots in the arm. The planting really got started when the nursery started producing - the major plantings. Before that we did do some planting around the circle drive. We had about, some \$10,000 in, I would have to think that Jasevich was president at the time. I can recall this because Leo Vanfasseel called me and said, "can you get me an estimate for doing some improvements - on the circle drive." Some areas were bare - there used to be a parking lot up above by the LAC on top of the Hill there - that was parking lot & up that hill - it was cinders and clay and so on. But, anyway, that was not to well vegetated and so on, so he said, give me an estimate of what it would cost to do some of this work - and we'll break lose for some money for some planting and so on. So, I said, "fine, how soon do you need it." He said, "8:00 tomorrow morning." I said, "yes, this is 11:00 today." So, I can remember working all night long at the desk and I went home for a brief lunch and I went back and I worked through the whole night. I wasn't uncommon to do that - I did that more than once. Leo came up and I was kind of happy about doing a quick job and I think I was within 4% of the low bid price. And, the work was done by a firm from Green Bay, Wattleby (?) Landscape Service. But, anyway, that involved about \$30,000 at that time and Ed Lare (?) was the architect on that. He did go outside - Ed Lare was from Birmingham and he had done a few of the buildings, the landscape plans for the building division



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MM: Somewhere close to 1980, I would think. About that time - so it would be in existence and this would be the fourteenth year. It had to be 80 or early 80's. Yes, early 80's.

RM: It's still going?

MM: Of yeah, we had planted \_\_\_\_\_ and, of course, a lot needs to be moved. And, of course, we purchased a tree spade for digging. You dig the hole with it and then you dig the plant and you set it in the hole - it's called a nursery spade. It takes a 60 inch \_\_\_\_\_ so it's been very effective. That was probably one of the biggest costs in this whole operation. But, for spending say \$20,000 in the total over the years we have accomplished planting 50 to 60 thousand dollars worth of material. So it was very economical and very effective. Goes to show you, sometimes around here we did do things that turned out good.

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RM: Now, was there any - I tend to notice or noticed in the past - that in the 1980's, when Appleberry was here, was there more planting at that time. Or was it just my thought that was going on - you were just going with an on-going planting project.

MM: We had - who was here then - we didn't get too many shots in the arm. The planting really got started when the nursery started producing - the major plantings. Before that we did do some planting around the circle drive. We had about, some \$30,000 in, I would have to think that Jamerich was president at the time. I can recall this because Leo VanTassel called me and said, "can you get me an estimate for doing some improvements on the circle drive." Some areas were bare - there used to be a parking lot up above by the LRC on top of the hill there - that was parking lot A up that hill - it was ciders and clay and so on. But, anyway, that was not too well vegetated and so on, so he said, give me an estimate of what it would cost to do some of this work and we'll break lose for some money for some planting and so on. So, I said, "fine, how soon do you need it." He said, "8:00 tomorrow morning." I said, "gee, this is 11:00 today." So, I can remember working all night long at the desk and I went home for a brief lunch and I went back and I worked through the whole night. I wasn't uncommon to do that - I did that more than once. Lee came up and I was kind of happy about doing a quick job and I think I was within 4% of the low bid price. And, the work was done by a firm from Green Bay, Wettley (?) Landscape Service. But, anyway, that involved about \$30,000 at that time and Ed Lare (?) was the architect on that. He did go outside - Ed Lare was from Birmingham and he had done a few of the buildings, the landscape plans for the building division



when they built these new buildings - he was involved in some of  
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them. So, this involved in planting some trees there along this street by the University Center and around the circle drive and some turf improvements. So, other than that, there was not very much allocated. We had an annual budget which was enough for pretty much fertilizer, some seed, annual flowers, but as far as purchasing nursery stock - no. So, then we went along and when we got to the nursery - when that started producing, we did a lot of planting. For instance, we look over at Payne, Halverson area, this was bare except for one native tree that was left there, but it used to be a field years ago. You see that whole area was part of the fair grounds, so it was an open area. And, nothing had been planted, it was just a few little trees around the building, but the other area, there was nothing there. So, we went in with some sizable trees from the nursery and you look at it now and it has made a tremendous difference - it really dressed up the area. We used flowering crab areas, several different varieties and different conifers in there. We got Austrian Pine Dog Firs and white pines, and what have you - and different deciduous trees, too. That made a big different and then we worked on planting, of course, inside the circle drive area and outside of it too. There, again, we get these \_\_\_\_\_ that were excavated during construction and they had a little bit of cover on there, but really nothing too much - and, course, one thing we had in mind was windbreak for the students who had to walk from the residence halls up to the class room areas. When it's zero and there's a twenty mile an hour wind, walking up there, a person could get quite cold. So we did plant a lot of evergreens, and at this time they're starting to become effective and, I would expect in a few years now, it's going to be very effective.

Trees, of course, are beneficial in more ways than what most people think. They're not just for lumber, and they're not just for esthetics. They cause buildings to become cooler, energy efficient when they're shaded in the summer, and course, the conifers certainly held break the wind - cause you less problems with snow removal, certainly, and comfort is another thing. There's a lot - and then, let's not forget how it cleanses the air. The leaves and needles, which-ever, they collect the dust particles and so on in the air and when it rains it washes down to the soil - so they continue cleansing the air. This is something that I always need to make a point of because most people think a tree is a tree is a tree and they play a very important part in our life and environment.

RM: Now, were there - like some of the other areas of campus - the more wooded areas, there's the triangle area by Lakeview Arena and places like that - there was more wild areas, did you do anything with those or were those just left?



MM: Unless it was something involved safety where a tree might fall on somebody, no that was left pretty much natural. We did get into developing part of that now when the dome was built. Of

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course, that changed a good portion of that and this was a natural area - there were paths in there and it was quite natural.

RM: That was kind of woods and then they put that speed skating rink in there.

MM: The speed skating rink was put in there - it had been a baseball field - I'm trying to think - they call it the Coop Field because the Co-op store was out there along Presque Isle Avenue, so Northern acquired that property there from Cliff Dow, maybe. Then, of course, the Olympic Speed Skating - trying to get money and recognition for Olympic Training Center here, they did put in the skating rink. And, I think, knowing full well that it was just a temporary deal, it was a little costly, but the construction was not done to sustain a continued operation; had problems with heating of the ice in the winter time. So that was put in there and, of course, when the Dome came along that went in basically that same area.

RM: I was just noticing the other day for instance, down here on Norwood, which is university property, there's probably what used to be sites of old house, but I noticed old roses, probably late 19th - early 20th century roses. Was anything ever done to round up - I know this is kind of become a big thing in the country - of rounding or gathering up the old rose stock for one thing. And, I was wondering was there any plan when you were in charge to -

MM: No, the intentions were always good. We intended to use some of these old plant material that was used way back in early 1900's or late 1800's and I'm thinking of the Powerderville location - the site down by the Jacobetti Center. This I wanted to clean up and kind of improve some of the plants of that era - we talk about roses - there was only a few plants who were planted back then. But, there was honeysuckle and there was barberry and some of these old shrub rose type - what they call shrub roses - which, incidently, are becoming popular again. Because, low and behold - we find out that they are hardy - you don't have to worry about them freezing out and so on. But, no these houses - not these houses but this area - Northern did acquire this property for expansion and this has got to be in the 70's and the houses were then sold (END OF SIDE A - MAX MUELLE)

#### **SIDE B OF MAX MUELLE**

MM: The last three out of the four - like I say there's one still remaining - the last three were acquired in 90 and 91, I believe.



But, anyway, the plant materials, a lot of it \_\_\_\_\_ fruit trees and, like you say rose and various other plants are still rare. And, Northern really didn't stretch out - see \_\_\_\_\_ had the idea that we were looking at Michigan State of the North - 100,000 students. Well, of course, the available \_\_\_\_\_ prospective students just weren't there anymore  
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and how many community colleges do we have, and so on and so on. So, the whole picture has changed and we did develop down there - we did take over Tracy Street - we acquired that from the city and we do own that. And the reason for this was to create in the area for fraternity houses which to this date, hasn't happened yet. But, anyway that was the idea for that and it did solve a lot of the traffic problems, having Tracy come out to Sugar Loaf Avenue and it was dangerous, to say the least. So not the traffic has moved over one block to the east, so it has worked out much better.

RM: You were saying that those ruins and that was another question I had been asking around and they said to check with you - what is the story about the ruins out by Jacobetti there?

MM: This was part of - and I think Dupont owned the Powderville (?) - now that was a part of it there and a part of it was sprawled out probably close to the Dead River in fact. There was several buildings through that area, this was one of them, and would it be the very early 1900's they had a tremendous explosion there and there were some people killed that worked there. And, I have to think back to a person whose father who told me this whose father worked there and they were so worried about him coming home. They lived up on Oak Street, and it shook windows way up there. And, I think there's more than one such disaster, but this was the greatest one. I think probably it wasn't too long after that it was shut down. But this was a part of it and some of the columns and a lot of the ruins were buried during construction of Jacobetti Center, and I said, " we shouldn't be burying this, we should be saving this as a historical site." Some of these fluted columns, you know and I really don't know just what of the operation was that stood there, but we did save some of it and it's laying there in pieces; and cleaned up the area so that we could see this. And, restoration was not completed, but there's a good history from the Historical Society.

RM: Is that area, as university historian and I'm looking at different areas that might be developed - that I find very intriguing because of the history of the Power Works and the explosions and people have this morbid curiosity, so I was thinking of getting some of the history, but I was really interested in maybe developing or seeing if that area could be developed as a park. Most of that has been, not landscaped, but it's been leveled and it would just mean maybe some plantings -



MM: See, the progression of the utilization for that area - there was a mill there, of course - Gannans Mill (?) was there and prior to Gannon, I guess I was wondering if it wasn't \_\_\_\_\_ Mill, but anyway that mill operation stood pretty much where the building is now. At least the southerly half of the building, and I think it was Pete ? who had the mill prior to that. But anyway there was sawdust \_\_\_\_\_ and so on. And, this came after the power mill era when the mill was put in there. And, like I say there was

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different buildings that were scattered around the area right down to the river. If you look down there you would see there are still some remains of some of the operation - not much - but, it would have been nice if some of it would have been preserved. So we can't find where there was evidence of \_\_\_\_\_

RM: So the ruins that are down there are powder works ruins, not sawmill?

MM: No, there's nothing left from the sawmill.

RM: The earliest of the ruins.

MM: That would be the earliest involvement and, I think, we're getting back to the late 1800's.

RM: Do you know of any other locations on campus where there was some historical activity, farms - you mentioned the fair grounds.

MM: Marquette County Fair Grounds - let's look at the still existing - it used to be the red barn - it's the green barn now. We refer to it by color - this was the cattle barn for the fair grounds. That is the only building left. Now that was the furthest - the most westerly building in that track of land where the fair grounds was located. And, I can remember going to the fair - it was back in the good old days that were really tough, but my brother and I both received a quarter, when we went to the fair with my parents. They took us into the grandstand show which maybe they paid 10 or 15 cents, but when I look over by the armory, if you will notice some pine trees growing around there, and there's some tall red pines. Those were growing there during the fair and the race track went around those - they were in the center.

RM: So, in the center of the property of the armory.

MM: Right, and Lincoln Avenue did not go through then - Lincoln Avenue wasn't there.

RM: Then how far east did the fair grounds come?

MM: The fair grounds came down almost - it would be just a little



bit east of Lincoln Avenue, as I recall I go right out to Presque

RM: The armory?

MM: The armory area would be pretty much the end of it. You see, I mentioned some of these red pines - it seems to me they were growing up there in the center of the area - I'm talking 55 years ago. This little farm here - and I can't recall the name right now - but you'll see that on the deeds, but this is like a little truck farm - where we're sitting here now.

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RM: It went from Wright Street up to circle drive?

MM: Right

RM: Wright Street and then Tracy and then circle drive. So this area - the dorms are and it's all kind of flat in here.

MM: Then, you had different owners - well, I'm thinking where Jamerich Hall where that's located - I'm trying to think of the name of the person whose family may have a little bit of a farm - anything over 2 acres, I guess they called it a farm. There was a faculty member with that name and I expect it was the family who lived there. It's interesting way back when, they had a couple of cows, and I still think I can remember when I was a kid when they had maybe a couple of horses here, and a couple of cows - so it was just a little side operation. Probably worked at the Cliff Dow, who knows. The transition and the fair was a nice fair.

RM: That lasted til about what year?

MM: Well, that went on til about 1939 - it was closed down with the onset of the second world war and never did continue then.

RM: The land to the east of us from Tracy down to Presque Isle - all the houses that were in here - who pretty much lived in there - people that worked at Cliff's Dow or it was just any residential area?

MM: It was just a residential area and, of course, some worked at the Dow and various other types of employment around here at the time.

RM: There was a street car line that ran down Presque Isle out to Presque Isle Park, was there a \_\_\_\_\_ up Wright Street to the Fair Grounds or to Holy Cross Cemetery? Do you remember - now, I know, the street car was taken out about 1931 - 32, I think.



MM: I don't think it did. But, it did go right out to Presque Isle cause I can remember my brother going out there on his school picnic on the street car - all the way out there - that's a long ways back then. He did attend the Nester Street School, which is now the Legion Club on Bluff Street - that was the Nester School. It's an old building - I love old buildings. I'm really sad that Northern doesn't have an old building - it really hurts me.

RM: Now we're down to Carey and Lee Halls and they're late 40's - early 50's.

MM: It's as cold as death itself.

RM: So, you've seen the campus then change considerably over the years.

MM: An awful lot.

RM: Now would you now that you're retired and so on - how would you sum up your personal involvement with beautifying the campus?

MM: I would say gratifying - it wasn't until the later years though that we were given the means to make improvements. Funding prior to that was - if they had monies left over - say if we had an easy year leaving this campus, it was funds left over in that account and that was kind of divided up if you could make a good justification, which we kind of refer to that as getting the crumbs. When you're charged with doing a job and you're not funded, you can't very well do it. I worked to try to pick up the slack - average work week was 40 hours and there was not overtime. I didn't expect any and I did my best to make something out of nothing. So, it was disappointing for years - very disappointing. But, towards the last, and I guess we're getting back to from 65 to 80 is a long time - a long drought. But, then I guess what really picked up the interest in people working here - I would say in grounds maintenance and well, we got the nursery going - I wasn't familiar to them either - it was a new operation - it wasn't for me because I had worked in this for many years. - When this became a reality and we started making plantings and changing - physically changing the look of this campus - that was the reward and it's something that will stay with you through your whole life. And, of course, replanting and putting in walks where they were needed for the years and all these things - it took a lot of money - but I think in the last 10 years we've made a lot of good improvements and this campus certainly looks a lot better. - I wish I would live for another 30 years, and I won't - but if I could live for another 30 years what a difference it'd make to look at. When the trees are big and it's going to make everything look so much more friendly.

RM: I was noticing - just to also compliment you on your work - the other day, for some reason trees have to grow to a certain point and they become effective - and I was noticing the circles



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MM: We have nothing left but production buildings left on campus. We have nothing of any significance. Like I always refer to, I shouldn't say this, to the Cohodas Building as being a good reformatory building - that's what it reminds me of.

RM: Just using it, people are very uncomfortable - it's a very vertical building rather than a friendly horizontal building.

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MM: An awful lot.

RM: How would you now that you're retired and so on - how would you sum up your personal involvement with beautifying the campus?

MM: I would say gratifying - it wasn't until the later years though that we were given the means to make improvements. Funding prior to that was - if they had monies left over - say if we had an easy year heating this campus, it was funds left over in that account and that was kind of divided up if you could make a good justification, which we kind of refer to that as getting the crumbs. When you're charged with doing a job and you're not funded, you can't very well do it. I worked to try to pick up the slack - average work week was 60 hours and there was not overtime. I didn't expect any and I did my best to make something out of nothing. So, it was disappointing for years - very disappointing. But, towards the last, and I guess we're getting back to from 65 to 80 is a long time - a long drought. But, then I guess what really picked up the interest in people working here - I would say in grounds maintenance and well, we got the nursery going - I wasn't familiar to them either - it was a new operation - it wasn't for me because I had worked in this for many years. When this became a reality and we started making plantings and changing - physically changing the looks of this campus - that was the reward and it's something that will stay with you through your whole life. And, of course, replacing and putting in walks where they were needed for the years and all these things - it took a lot of money - but I think in the last 10 years we've made a lot of good improvements and this campus certainly looks a lot better. I wish I would live for another 30 years, and I won't - but if I could live for another 30 years what a difference it'd make to look at. When the trees are big and it's going to make everything look so much more friendly.

RM: I was noticing - just to also compliment you on your work - the other day, for some reason trees have to grow to a certain point and they become effective - and I was noticing the circle



drive - some of the trees - maple trees have now grown to the point where you can actually see them lining and shading the walkways.

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And it was just a complete difference from when I was first here and that was kind of a barren, hilly plain and very - kind of almost disturbing - it was like you were out in a isolated, desolate place.

MM: For instance, when they put in this new parking lot on Lincoln Avenue, of course \_\_\_\_\_ so that was constructed so the water would flow to the west and we tried to - hopefully it would - most of it would percolate into the soil rather than run out into the street. That was effective, but we did plant - we developed this - we even have a sprinkler system around there and we have trees planted there and we have good turf and it looks inviting. It's not just another blacktopped area. You get so much pavement, it looks like pavement - that's all it looks like - it doesn't do anything for you unless you want to land a plane or something. But, anyway with the trees around there - and they're coming nice too. In another 20 years, this will look great. Likewise, the same out here - we tried to keep in mind the esthetics and it's got to be inviting.

So looking back, there's some things that I'm real happy about and I try not to think of the long drought here where it was - a person could almost lose interest. You keep on hoping and, I guess if you \_\_\_\_\_ enough things do happen. I'm glad that I was able to accomplish some of those things before retirement.

RM: So, what are you doing now in retirement?

MM: In retirement, I'm supervisor for Marquette Township and I've been on the board in trustee capacity for a total of over 20 years. This has become quite time consuming and I'm a type of a person - I make a commitment and I'm going to do it whether hell freezes over or not. So that's coming along good - two new fly rods and I haven't used them yet. That's not a good point with me - years ago I was an avid fly fisherman and I spent many, many happy hours when I was a kid. So that, hopefully, will come about too. I keep very busy.

RM: You said you also keep a vegetable garden.

MM: That's a big part of it - working the soil and working with plants. I started my first little nursery when I was 6 years old.

RM: You started with your family - was your family involved - your father was involved but was it kind of a family tradition to be involved in landscaping and gardening? Now, are you from Marquette - was your family from here?



MM: I was born here - my father was born in Germany and my mother was born here. She was born in 1890 and she lived to be almost 96. She didn't like Cohodas building either. Dad was a plantsmen and a landscape architect and so on. He was the same - he was the only Page Fourteen

person that ever took pruning shears to church to see if there's anything that needed to be done in the yard.

RM: You said you started planting when you were 6 yrs.

MM: 6 years old I started my own little nursery - the plant material that dad caste out that he didn't think it was worthwhile to try to save and it wasn't much good - I planted. Oddly, enough it all grew and that very much impressed him. I was interested in it from the day one. It's great to work with something like that - you have first of all it's good on the nerves and you do get a sense of accomplishment when you see something grow up from very small into something larger and impressive.

RM: As you come on campus you can see it's an ongoing thing - sort of your legacy.

MM: I can look all over Marquette County and Upper Michigan and look at some of the work that I've been responsible for. My nephew, of course, he is a landscape architect down in Detroit area for the Metro Parks. It seems to be in the bloodline somewhere.

RM: I think there's something about people and plants, some people have a knack to nurture them and to develop them; and then others will kill a dead cactus.

MM: It's very simple to think of plants as just like human beings - we are all living things. Don't treat yourself like you treat your plants, cause you may not last very long. I don't talk to my plants - I've enjoyed it. I hope I live to be 100 - I won't, but just like my dad he was plotting nursery stock in a wheel chair - that was his life.

RM: Did he have a shop here in town?

MM: No, our business was just west of town where you see the Ski Doo shop now - North County Sales.

RM: What was the name of it?

MM: Meadowbrook Nursery.

RM: Was that in operation till when?

MM: It ceased when I came out to Northern in 1965 - in fact, I had enough work, I kept the crew busy till the end of that season.



RM: Personally, I don't remember seeing anything but I came in 69.

MM: My phone still rings and I enjoy talking about plants to anybody.

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RM: From my perspective, you've done a very good job on campus and I can say in the last - like you were saying in the 1980's and all of a sudden things started to happen and now I can see, not only the plants and the ground - now you can actually see them reach a state of flourishing where they're very noticeable and you are getting the shadows against the sun and so on. As you go along -

MM: I think we have 9 different pines on campus. I still take the dendrology (?) class on field trip every year - I've been doing that for 30 years. I love to do that. A lot of these trees I know by the first name here.

RM: You take the class on a tour but if we plan such a thing we can have a garden tour of the campus - you could lead something like that.

MM: Yeah. So we go almost from one end to the other - we go from the nursery all the way back - well it's a three hour lab so we use up the 3 hours. Like I tell them, you may get through 5 minutes early here but we talk about the different trees and identification of trees. They have an idea of what's on campus and, of course, they are learning about trees. It's interesting, some students are from downstate and some are Yoopers. They both have different perspectives on trees - some are real knowledgeable and some Yoopers well if it's green it's a Christmas tree and other than that I suppose it's a maple. But, it's fun, we enjoy it - the students enjoy it and, I guess, I'll continue that.

I hope I helped you out a little bit and if there's anything that comes up, I certainly will get back to you.