

My name is Amy Retz and I am interviewing Marie Ostola today at her home in Ishpeming Michigan. Today's date is February 24, 1996. Our interview will focus on Mrs. Ostola's memories as a board member of National Mine.

me: What is your full name?

mrs.o: E. Marie Ostola. On the board it's Evelyn.

me: When and where were you born?

mrs.o: Ishpeming, Michigan, 1932.

me: Who are your parents?

mrs.o: They're deceased, but they were Ruth and John Marietti (sp).

me: How many brothers/sisters do you have?

mrs.o: There were 8 boys and 8 girls living.

me: When ~~where~~ were you married?

mrs.o: January 27, 1951.

me: Do you have any children?

mrs.o: I have 4 boys and one girl.

me: What school did you attend as an elementary student?

mrs.o: St. John's Catholic school, in Ishpeming.

me: What age did you begin school?

mrs.o: 4 years old.

me: Describe a typical day as an elementary student.

mrs.o: Well, we had full curriculum. When we went got into junior high we had to get up at, off to school. walk the mile to take swimming at Ishpeming High school and then go back to our own school. to take gym and Home-economics.



me: what was lunch like?

mrs. o. we walked home for lunch and walked back to school again.

me: was there a cloak room?

mrs. o. Yes, but they were hooks.

me: what was recess like?

mrs. o. we went into the basement of the school, cause you in school mostly through the winter time and school was right downtown Ashpeming. So we'd practice our operettas down there, but mostly we took our gym down over at. I mean in junior high we took it at Ashpeming High School.

me: ~~Describe~~ Describe the clothing you wore or were there dress codes?

mrs. o. There wasn't any, well, you had to be neat and clean, but they didn't care ~~about~~ how many patches you had on your clothes, but we did have long heavy socks, big folded up underwear under them.

me: How did you celebrate holidays in school?

mrs. o. Every holy day, every holiday we had, we made posters and the teachers really went out for that. We really celebrated all of them so that we really knew what they were about. The sisters we good about that.

me: How were unruly children handled?

mrs. o. Lots of times with a yardstick (laughing). but we had some dandies, <sup>I mean</sup> at noon hour sometimes like up in 7th, 8th grade, in the winter time the snowbanks were really big, so there was nothing for them to open a window and jump out into.

me: Did you graduate from high school and what year?

mrs. o. I went two years to Ashpeming High, then I went 1/2 to St Pauls Catholic school because they had gotten a bus by that time for Ashpeming kids to ride down to the catholic school and then in January I quit school to get married, so before my first son was going to graduate I wanted to get my diploma. So, I went to Mr. Lindberg at National Mine School and he said well I could come back to school but I didn't want to do that because I had three boys in high school at that time, so I asked if I could take an U.S. course + graduate that way. So I took a two year <sup>accounting</sup> course and I finished that by myself at home in one year and I had a couple of English classes + I had a history class I think + I got my diploma from National Mine School.



me: Did you attend college?

mrs.o: No, but I didn't go to college, but I did take other classes that I could learn from and then.

me: As a student how many different teachers did you have?

mrs.o: On every year we had, well we had first kindergarten, first grade where they were one room. Then there was second grade. Then 3rd and 4th were together. & then from 5th grade on it was always just one class in the classroom.

me: Were there any sports?

mrs.o: Not for girls, but we did go ice skating up at Dishpening's ice rink and on our times off we went tobogganing all the time on the hill in front of the house. There's always ski riding around the hills there was a big ski jump in front of our house and a big ski jump behind our house up in Lake Angeline? So, the boys were always in and we skimmered, we made our own skimmer, out of old barrel staves? and sat on them and came down the hills.

me: What kind of subjects were taught in school?

mrs.o: We learned reading, writing, spelling, history, art, sewing, gymnastics.

me: How big was the school?

mrs.o: There was about 30, 35 to 40 kids in every class.

me: What chores or jobs did you have after school?

mrs.o: After school, well coming from a big family everybody has chores. So, when my mother had a baby I would have to take over as a mother & do the washing, cooking, and get the kids off to school and I wasn't that old myself, really, just a young teenager, but it teaches you how to be a mother, a good mother and I wouldn't trade any of it.

me: What age did you begin driving?

mrs.o: I was in my twenties I think, but something funny happened along that way. I didn't have enough confidence, so I thought if I took driver's ed. from Mr. Disneis' at Dishpening High School I would get confidence.



(continued)

mrs. o: So, I, my sister <sup>in law</sup> and I, went and took drivers ed when that came into our and you really only get confidence by doing. So, I learned my lesson that way.

me: Which grade did you enjoy the most.

mrs. o: All of them were fun, cause you had the same friends all through school and I enjoyed all of school, I, eighth grade was fun cause you knew you were gonna go on into high school after that. ~~and~~.

me: Who was your favorite teacher?

mrs. o: My favorite teacher wasn't even one that was in school. This was a lady that was just up the street from us and on Saturdays she would take us and teach us how to sew little dresses, learned how to smock learned how to crochet, and we made quilts and then every ~~2~~ summer she would take us down to the orphanage and we'd bring everything we made, and that's the teacher that I remember.

me: Did you ever go on field trips?

mrs. o: No, there wasn't the transportation, really, for it, but we did when we went to St. Johns school. There was always at the end of the school year there was a big party at Jackson Grove for all the kids, & the ice cream and everything, that they did every year for us. had a big picnic down at Jackson's Grove.

me: Do you remember the Depression

mrs. o: I was born during the Depression, but my mom and dad never laid their problems on us we didn't know that we were supposed to be        up or anything like that there.

me: Were you in school during the war?

mrs. o: Yes, and I remember the end of it. The day <sup>it</sup> came home and everybody was so jubilant because the war had ended and ~~that~~ <sup>yes</sup> I remember it. I wrote to my uncle always when he was in the army and stationed over there on one of the islands        or something and I've always remembered that and have been very close to him because of ~~it~~ when my other uncle was in the navy New Caledonia? he was in, I remember he sent me back a big wide silver bracelet → Pg. 4.



(con't).

mrs.o: That said that on there. That's why I remember where he was, I wrote to him too, but everybody wrote to their, wrote to the man in the service, I think at that time just to keep the morale up.

About the Depression, when we bought this house, back in 1961, it had belonged to Charlie Heckle? His brother, but they were both deceased by that time. But we have a check that was written during the Depression & they got it back because money wasn't any good, everybody lost their money at that time, but they sent + ~~accepted~~ we have the letter that was sent back with that check saying why they couldn't accept it, so that's pretty old.

me: When were you a board member at National Mine?

mrs.o: I was elected, the first time they voted for a board for the NICE School district, ~~the~~ Westwood High School, I was elected onto that board and that was in 19... I thought it was in 1971, but on the plaque it says 1972, and I stayed until '79' and then when Mrs. Neil left, had to leave to move with her husband to Ohio, they asked me to fill her position again, so I went back in 1981 and finished that.

me: Were there any other women?

mrs.o: No other women, I was the first woman elected to the board and I was the first woman president of the board.

me: Why were you willing to serve on the school board?

mrs.o: Well, I had three sons that graduated from Nat'l Mine School and our third son one day, he's very, always wanted to be inventive with his hands and that, he liked welding and things like that and Nat'l Mine couldn't give him that. Out of frustration from just learning in classes where he had to learn out of books, he got to the point of not being able to ~~express~~ talk one day. He lost all ability to talk, knew what he wanted to say and couldn't & it was all out of frustration of not being able to create with his hands and I thought I wanted two more children by that time and I thought they have to go to a different high school, they have to go to a high school where they won't be this frustration for kids. Then from, I mean I always knew I would persevere for it and that's why I pushed for a new high school. I was publicity director for Tilden Township and South Ely at the time and worked towards that.



me: What kinds of things were accomplished while you were on the board?

MSO: At my first meeting as president we took in special education teachers, I mean special education students, into the district that would be aloud to go into the classroom and learn with other. It was called <sup>main stream</sup> streamlining, and that was one of the first things that, the first thing I did at the first meeting, was get that passed. My youngest brother was born special ed. He's I don't know, I guess they just call them special people now. At that time they didn't expect any of those kind of students to live very long, but today on Jan. 22nd he was 44 yrs old. + he's in the Kiwanas and he has go right through school. My mom and dad prayed for a school to open when he got to be 5 yrs old and they opened a school in ushpeming for special ed. kids. When David got 5, it ran for 3 yrs and then there wouldn't have been a school to go, but they added on some more years and it kept doing that until he got to graduate and then from graduation he went into skill shops, working, making picnic tables and things like that there and now he is retired and living with my brother and sister-in-law, I'd have watched you know, + we take care of him a lot, too, when they go on vacations or something, but David has pedaled across the United States on a bicycle built for two with my brother. He has traveled from California down through New Orleans up to Georgia on his bicycle built for two. So, special ed. kids can do, they do not <sup>need</sup> have to be pampered, + they have to be watched and they have to be disciplined, but they've got to be loved + they do nothing but love. They don't know anything else but to love.

me: What kind of problems did you have to handle

MSO: One of the big ones was some parents wanted their high school kids to be picked up at the door on Peticot lake, way in off the road at Three lakes + they're aloud to walk ~~one~~ one mile + 1/2 according to state law and there was a better for a bus to turn around within, I think, <sup>within the</sup> 1/2 mile even + that's what kindergarten kids can do, but a state man came up + rode the bus + this is a one road lumber truck traveled road + the man from lower Michigan said you go right to the door + pick them up.

We had others, one day Mr. Gothy went to visit this one family + it was way up by Big Bay, way in off the road. The only way you could get in there was walk almost. What they were living in was the back of a pick up truck + their fire was out in the snow + they expected to be bused to school, the kids. So, a lot of times we, like witch lake way in our school district + these kids had to, we asked if they could be tuition paid, to go through or if Republic would take those people, + Big Bay some of them went into Marquette then, Marquette bus picked up. But those people were going in and living where it was impossible, so they were problems.



me: What is the job and responsibility of a board member?

ms.o.: To keep the school district running, money wise, supplies, so that children learn, good teachers, knowing how to pick good teachers, making sure that they're learning. It's fun, but you've gotta really have the love for ~~it~~ children.

me: ~~Can you~~ Tell me about Nat'l Mines involvement in the WICE Consolidation.

ms.o.: Well we had to, as publicity director, there were meetings set up, at that time there was a stage in there and you sat in the seats which now is the cafeteria at Nat'l Mine, but we had to have places ~~of~~ meetings so that people could gather together & get out their frustrations or ask their questions & answer them, so we had panels of administrators, school board members local people and that, so that people were able to ask all the questions that were wanted to ask, so that they would be ~~knowledgeable~~ knowledgeable when they voted on, cause they had every district, every school district that was going to be involved in this voting had to vote on 3 different things and every ~~one~~ one of them had to pass & every one of these pieces. So, & it did it's a miracle everybody passed it. They said oh it would never do it, but and they had to except the debt. They had to except the busing, they all had to want to close down their school & build a new one. & it did it passed.

me: What were the feelings between the Ishpeming board & the Nat'l Mine School Board?

ms.o.: Well, we ~~we~~ had a system that after we got the ~~ok~~ to go ahead with the school and everything we incorporated working with Ishpeming & Neguane cooperatively and it worked out really nice. We set up the school so that anybody that wanted to try the nursing program from either any of these schools could come to one of the schools and sometimes it was our school, sometimes they had to be bused down to a two hour block at Ishpeming or down to Neguane whatever it was that they were going to be teaching but at that time we had electronics, we had automotive, we had welding, we had nursing, you could even go learn in the food department. It was more of a, for the students that wanted hands-on learning, which is what I started out to say when I say my son lose his speech ever being frustrated. It's not that our son wasn't smart, because when he went on to ~~learn~~ learn at Ishpeming to learn welding, Mr. Ruesing was really good about that. Our son Gary & Steven Anderson went & asked Mr. Ruesing, who was the Principal of Nat'l Mine, at the time, if they could go to Ishpeming in the fall and see about going to school there if they could get welding & Mr. Ruesing said if they would give them welding, he would allow them to transfer but the parents would have to pay tuition for them to go to Ishpeming p. 7.



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mrs. o; & they went down there and were accepted for the following year, so Steven and Gary both went there as of this day Gary is still working for C&I after 24 yrs as a welder, in maintenance & Steven is making mega bucks in construction out on the east coast, oh in Pennsylvania, and my husband had signed for him to get into the union & he's been working steady ever since as a welder & a boss now. So it paid for them to be able to go learn because they had god given talent for it & it's frustrating for children to go to school when they can't use their hands. I think it's hard for superintendents, principals, all them they come out of a college education, I don't think they understand a person that has the ability to do things, the crafts with the hands & the need for that. I don't think they understand that, because after I left the board & Mr. Green came in as the superintendent he got rid of most of that stuff, I don't think they understand the student that has the ability to do with their hands. It doesn't mean they're dumb, ~~just~~ because they have to use all kinds of math <sup>for everything</sup> they're going to do. Gary had trigonometry, calculus everything when he went to Ashpeming High then, & he had a lot of it at Wat'l Mine too but, it worked out so that his senior year he kept taking the harder ones & it paid off, so, it isn't that he was stupid it's just the need for using his hands.

me: what are your special memories as a board member?

mrs. o: I sat with all these men on the board, Bill Hampton happened to be my mother's cousin so that was kind of like a relative on the board, but the men, the principal, the superintendent, everything, they were really good to work with. I never, I didn't go there as one of these primadonnas that had to have the door held for me or anything like that there. I was there for the students, the parents, and administration just to help solve the problems, and they were very very good.

me: what are your memories of your children attending the Wat'l Mine school?

mrs. o: They had fun. They liked it, and they hold all their friends still today. It's nice to be small ~~but~~ but I can see where having them all under one roof is going to be great for family life. My daughter was the head of the P.T.O. at Wat'l Mine for ~~at least~~ at least 2 yrs, but she didn't take it this year now, but it was so hard for parents. If you had like she had one daughter at Wat'l Mine & one daughter at North Lake.



miso: which PTO do you go to so that you're not leaving your children home every night to run to special things. which ones, if you have more children than that, which one do you pick to go to PTO to, is the other one going to be hurt if you don't go to that one to. so, I think reasons like that there & same when they are having programs which program do you go to? maybe both of them are going on at the same time. which kid is going to get sidled because you chose the other one to go to. So it's gonna solve those problems. I do think busing & everything will be maybe made easier for the school district. They say it's going to be a lot cheaper, I don't know, it's still going to cost as many students, but I think it's going to work out for the better.

me: What superintendent did you work with & what was the relationship of a board member to the superintendent?

miso: Mr. Gothe was the superintendent & Mr. Lindberg was the principal & they were very very easy to get along with. we felt free to call each other if either one had a question & wanted an answer for it. They were very nice to work with. I enjoyed them both.

me: Do you remember any teachers or events in particular?

miso: Just accomplishing our goal of getting that school built. Having the choice of what it was you wanted to study for the students. It's amazing how great the land and everything came along, working together the uniforms & everything for them. All the sports that the kids could finally get into in elementary ~~and on~~ ~~cause~~ when they started with cross country skiing & snowshoeing & with our long winters it's, I'm very proud of the school. ~~before~~ I like the location. Before it was ever built we lived in the house ~~right~~ close right there & I would go stand in that field which was, it used to be a hayfield, cause my mother-in-law married a man that used to go up there to cut the hay & that's where Westwood stands right now, but when we lived right close there I'd walk ~~right~~ over there & it was just so beautiful just to sit & stand in that spot never knowing I would be involved in a new school being built there.



me! Do you remember Mrs. Gleason's programs?

Mrs. O: yes, I was head of PTO at that time, & we put on a really nice retirement for her & she had the biggest orchid on to wear. It was just jam packed ~~the~~ with people that came back to honor her. She was great.

me! Could you describe one of her programs?

Mrs. O: well all of our children were in her programs. She just put so much of herself into them. She always did the playing of the piano, she always did the directing of the students, she was just an overall good person. I remember when my son had her for kindergarten, our oldest son, he had hung a picture of an Indian <sup>the</sup> head & <sup>the</sup> headdress on that Indian & it was out in the hall & ~~the~~ it was only ~~at~~ kindergarten, I thought well so what, but now when I realize what he ~~was~~ could do by the time he went to school, yeah, it was like an 8th grader or high schooler would have done ~~done~~ by the time he was just a kindergarten. I thought well this is what kids do, you know ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ they can just do this, but he's always excelled all right through school.

me! How did the students & teachers celebrate holidays in school?

Mrs. O: They always, same as they do now I suppose, they make sure that you understand what the day is about & make something to go with it no matter what president's day it was or what holiday it was they always came home with their hand made things for it. Pilgrims, headdress, Indian headdress, coming around thanksgiving time. She just had really good ideas, all of the teachers did.

me! Did the students ever receive gifts from teachers?

Mrs. O: not so much years ago, no, not like they give now. In fact I'm not sure I got for that candy bit. What about the poor child that's doing so, he thinks he's doing his very best, but his very best, ~~best~~ is not an A or a B, you know, sometime they're left thinking I'm not good, I don't happen to like to see that happening to those other students. I'm sure the teachers must have some way of making their, making them feel better about themselves, but I'm not so sure that I go for that candy bit.

me! What areas attended the school?

Mrs. O: all the way from witch lake up to Three Lakes down to which took in West Ishpeming & that's Ely ~~Top~~, Ishpeming Twp, Tilden Twp, Humboldt, & even Michigamme, but then they chose to send their children, some chose to send their children to Republic. They voted to send their kids to Republic, but then we had to go beyond that to 3 lakes & pick up children because they're in it. I think now the exchanged witch lake for some more land of M-95. P. 10  
I think they gave witch lake area to Republic.



me: How has the building changed since you were a board member? (westwood)

mrs. o: I think they're taking very good care of it, we've went up for the swimming meets, we go for the wrestling meets, we go for basketball, I think the whole thing is, they keep it very very neat & keep it right up to stuff.

me: How did the community use the building throughout the years?

mrs. o: Oh community schools has utilized that building, all the extra curricular activities that go on. People go there to walk in the winter time, get their walking in, It's used all the time.

me: what was the basketball <sup>baseball &</sup> team like?

mrs. o: We didn't have a baseball team. I know John Ponte put in a cross country skiing over at North Lake, Mr. Gray put on a lot of snowshoeing & cross country at Nat'l mine. I think they even have it at westwood, I'm not sure. Well, I have to say my grandson is on the varsity basketball team, but we've followed basketball right through when he was down in the low grades too, so it's fun. My brother & sister-in-law moved here from Boston & they attend every one of them, so we go together, & out of town we go to them. They're doing great this year. We couldn't ask for better, and they're very intelligent, they're honor <sup>roll</sup> students, & everything, so, they're intelligent not only capable of being skilled basketball players, but they use their brains & they're very young polite people.

me: What was the conflict like with the Ishpeming schools?

mrs. o: Well I remember when our children were in Nat'l Mine in band & they kicked up this rally, they were going to go down town & march against joining Ishpeming School or whatever. I wouldn't allow my kid to march in it even though they were in the band. I would not because I did not want fighting, I thought that was very very bad to be that much against bettering the schools & stuff. I didn't see that at all. So I didn't allow my children to march in that parade against Ishpeming.

me: What makes National Mine special to you?

mrs. o: well, my children went there, I graduated from there, small schools are great for their days, but I do think now we have to watch how our money is spent & so I think ~~there~~ going with a bigger school where everybody's under one roof, like I said before, now parents won't be pulled as to where they have to go to PTO. or school plays & to see teachers, & have to remember which school is in what, because my husband was bringing our 2 granddaughters to school, they'd missed the bus & he get way over almost by the North Lake School & one granddaughters said grandpa where are you going I'm going to National Mine.



Mrs. O. So he had to drop the one of a North Lake & drove back over to Nat'l Mine to drop the other one off because he got mixed up of who was going to what school. So,

me: ~~was~~ was there a National mine yearbook?

Mrs. O. Yes there was a National mine yearbook. Our children bought all of them as they were in school. They gave our first 3; ~~with~~ our 2 younger ones went to lower grades until Westwood opened up, but they all went their own ways in what they were interested in. We didn't tell them what to become when they went to school or got out of school. They all got terrific education no matter if it was National mine that they graduated from or Westwood.

~~Pat~~ <sup>Bill</sup> is the director of physical medicine & Rehabilitation at Mercy Health Center in DeBogue, Iowa.

Vince our second son & Phil, is 24 yrs with the American Airlines administration in San Francisco & by the way they own the airline, the employees do.

Gary has 24 years as a welder & maintenance at the Filden Mine.

Chris is a mom, but she is also director of CCD at St. Johns School in Ishpeming.

Danielle is with Johnson & Controls as an instrument technician.

So they each picked their own field that they wanted to go into & they're doing very well.

me: What were the classrooms like?

Mrs. O. They were adquitt, but like Mrs. Gleason said, when the kindergartners ~~are~~ start coming in & our children were older. Students started being very uncontrollable. She said they were peeing on the hot radiators, and she was ready to get out of teaching it was a different kind of a student was coming along. So, there is a difference, but you have to understand, ~~kg~~ the population has doubled in size, so it can't be back to what we had years ago. You have to change with the times. Her change was to get out of teaching.

me: As Nat'l Mine is closing what are your thoughts or feelings?

Mrs. O. Kind of sad, but like I said with double the population & going larger even you have to do something different. We kept changing the school, it was sad to take out the auditorium cause you could sit there & watch the plays, but there wasn't room for the students then, so they had to have a place, & then the state comes in with all their rules & regulations for eating & everything & that all had to be changed, so you had to have a different place for the school kitchen & cafeteria, they couldn't eat out in the halls anymore or something, so there went the auditorium



mrs o: then if you go up to watch the basketball games at Wat's mine the seating had to be where the stage was & it just, I know when they played basketball up there you sat in the auditorium to watch it & they thought the net was another player for the National mine Team because they would keep moving the opponent over towards it so he'd get caught up, his feet caught up in the net & then he could get the ball, so the school was just getting too small for the rules the state was putting in & for the double amount of kids & something has to change.

me: What was the lasting impact the Nat'l mine school had on the community.

mrs o: Well, I can't say that it was close enough for kids to walk to school & that's what they'll miss because the school bus picked up almost everybody there wasn't anybody in the location that can walk to school any more I don't think. Mostly the nostalgia would be from their fathers & mothers & past generations grandmas & grandpas all graduating from the same school, always going from kindergarten through that the older people keep this. I don't think it bothers the younger students, it's the older people that have all these memories from going there themselves that keep hanging on to this, the younger ones seem to adjust no matter what.

me: Who are the people you remember most your first year as a board member?

mrs o: Mr. Gotte, Mr. Lindberg, naturally being the first board you remember all of them that were on there & hope for the best for all of them. The teachers were very, very nice I got along with all of them that I had. That I came into contact with. Just in case, I don't judge people so I guess I just get along with whoever comes in my life.

me: I understand that you have some knowledge/artifacts about the Gold Mine School could you tell me about that.

mrs o: I called Mrs. Amen about that because they wanted something from way back when, The history's of the schools, when we moved into this house Mr. Heckle left a program from the 1897 graduating class from the Gold mine school & I just always kept it.