

Jeremy Ruesing's Interview  
with  
Francis Ruesing

Me: Hi my name is Jeremy Ruesing and I will be interviewing Fran Ruesing, this is December 13, 1990, and I am at my house.

Me: What years did you work at National Mine School?

Mr. R: From 1961 ~~through~~ 1997

Me: In as much detail as possible please describe your job?

Mr. R: Well I held several positions, when I first came to National Mine School I taught a sixth grade, and then after several years there I coached the National Mine Baseball and Basketball teams, and then I worked as the remedial reading teacher and as a secondary teacher I taught history, economics, and science, later I was made the principle, a position I held until I left the school and went to Westwood.

Me: What was the most satisfying part of your career?

Mr. R: Ah, watching students develop into productive citizens, and knowing that ah, that you had a part in this.

Me: What was the most difficult part of your job?

Mr. R: Dealing with broke parents, I believe

Me: How or why did you choose your career?

Mr. R: Well, it's been such a long time since I made that decision, but I guess one of the reasons would be that Northern College at that time was a Teacher's College, and I couldn't afford to attend any other school down state so I guess it was predestant for me to become a teacher.

Me: How have you seen the duties of your job change over the years?

Mr. R: Well when the National Mine School District merged with Ishpeming Township, and Champion and Ealy School Districts and the economy of the area began to expand, the numbers of students increased to where are school enrollment more than doubled what it had been in the early 60's, and the teacher's and support staff also grew in size.

Me: During your career were you involved in any special projects, programs or extra

curricular activities?

Mr. R: Ah, yes, part of it I think I answered it earlier, Ah, I also took part of the development of the Red Dust project here at National Mine School, and I felt that this project was special and it was an exciting situation to be in, Ah, specially being in part of it's evollment. Ah, it's birth, it was a good project, good for the students, good for the teachers, the staff and the rest of the community, it gave us all a good look into the past, and appreciating also of the past. Ah, it gave us a look at what had taken place, and Ah, as students you began to dig into the backgrounds of parents, grandparents, and great great grandparents, and these kids found that these ordinary people, people that they thought were ordinary, were not really so ordinary, they were special, ah they had participating in a number of events, world and local, Ah, be at the strikes of the 40's and 50's, Ah, the depression of the early 30's, ah world War I or II, Korea, Vietnam, Ah, these men also worked the fields in the fields and the forests and the mine's of the area, and the women raised families that were all proud of because these kids also passed through the halls of National Mine school.

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ME: Did you receive any special training for your job?

MR.R: Ah, yes I attended Northern Michigan University, and I received the Bachelor of Science degree and a Master's degree and administration, it took about six years to do this.

ME: Could you describe some interesting or humorous events that happened in your career?

MR.R: I believe I did that when I talked about the Red Dust Project, Ah, that was an important part of my career. However I remember when we were told we could have a baseball team here at National Mine, Ah, but we needed a field to play on. So the kids (the team) and myself spent the summer there clearing a field that was located in the southeast end of the school lot, and Ah, we cut trees and pulled, and hauled Ah, away sawed and rock, and some of the boulders were so big that we had to go down to the Hercules Powder Mill, to get some dynamite, to blast them out. Ah, we had the county come in with a grader, and Mr. Magnuson one of the citizens of the community spent a day grading the field. Ah, we borrowed snow fence from wherever we could Ah, find it Ah, I guess we picked up a lot of it from the banded fields. Ah, we built a backstop with chickenwire that Ah, Gene Bervenue Ah, who was one of the baseball players got from his dad's shop. I guess we were all proud of that field, all except the visiting teams, they just never knew where the chuckholes were or where an unexpected rock may appear.

ME: Could you describe what your co-workers were like and how did you feel toward them?

MR.R: Well I felt that during my whole career at National Mine I was surrounded with a group of dedicative people. Ah, be a teachers support staff, of parents Ah, board of education. Ah, administration. Ah, they could all be counted on to give that little extra, that is one of the main ingredients to success, and I was proud to be associated with them.

ME: At any time did you feel like changing your career?

MR.R: No, I don't think so, I felt Ah, satisfied with my job and education.

ME: How did the community feel about National Mine School?

MR.R: I always felt that people of National Mine were supportive of the school district education system, and most regarded education and the high priority of their children's development.

me; Did any of your family members or relatives work for the school?

Mr. R: Yes, my daughter-in-law. Ah she's a, one of the support members of the district.

Me; How has the building itself changed over the years?

Mr. R: Well, several of the big changes of the building were the removal of the stage and auditorium, that were a part of the National Mine School for, a very important part of the National Mine School for such a long time. But with are growth we needed to make room a lunch room and a multy purpose room. Ah, students ate lunch in the hallways, and the cooking was done in what is now part of Mr. Keto shop. Also ah, we added to the old building, the new elementary wing, and this housed the kindergarten, first, second, third grades.

Me; Have you maintained contact with former students or co-workers?

Mr. R: Ah, yes I met, I meet a number of former students and we get to visit and talk about what has taking place since they left school. I also visit with a number of former co-workers.

Me; If you had to do it all over again would you choose the same career?

Mr. R: Ah yes I believe I would, I felt satisfied with my position and I enjoyed most of my days at National Mine.

Me; What were the greatest challenges you faced through you career?

Mr. R: How to deal with a large number of students that we were getting and trying to provide them with a education that would make them competative in the job market, or whatever indpver ah they felt they were going into.

Me; What were your biggest responsibilities on the job?

Mr. R: Did you ever win any special awards or be recognized for your job performance?

Mr. R: Ah yes by the superintendent and the board of education.

Me; What are your fondest memories of National Mine school?

Mr. R: Well I have a number of memories ah are success with my early Sixth grade science projects. Ah raising ah chickens from eggs ah and ah volcanoes that erupted, and ah there was just a number of those things.

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MR. R! Ah kids really got a big charge out of those, and my trips to Washington D.C. ah with a bus load of eighth grade students ah for Red Dust. Ah my secretary Mary Johnson hollering in fin because someone shot the door on the safe and she was **inside**. Ah visiting with teachers each morning before class started and having coffee with the cooks and custodians at break time. All of these are good memories of days gone by at National Mine School.

Me! Thanks for your time.