

Views from Sault Ste. Marie - Education

Deanna Swanson –Manistique

Now I was born in Indian Town here in Manistique, so it was, all Indians lived there at the time. It wasn't very nice. We lived in a shack. Going to school here wasn't pleasant. In fact they used to lock us out of Lincoln school, they used to say, 'You carriage children step aside, you stand over there.' And then they'd let all the other kids go in ahead of us, and then they'd slam the door and lock it on us. And then they'd holler through the door and tell us to go home. So we'd go home. At the time I really didn't realize what was going on, you know, until later on because they never really did say, 'Well, because you're Indian, you don't belong here.' They'd just shut the door in our face.

Leona Litzner –St. Ignace

We talked a mixture of French and Indian, so when we started school, Ray and I, we had a terrible time. Our school was, there wasn't that many "Native Americans" in that school, at least they didn't own up to it and say, 'hey I'm Indian,' and my father never did either, because if he'd said he was Indian, he never would have gotten any work. The other kids made fun of us, especially me, I was a 'gypsy, dirty little squaw, dirty little Indian.' I had one good skirt, one sweater, one blouse, and a nice pair of shoes. And I'd go to school in the morning, and when I'd come home at night, I'd take that whole outfit off, and wash it out and dry it and iron it and wear it the next day. And when, so when it came to the next year and I had to go back to school I, I told my mother, I tried, I started, I went to school for maybe a month or so, and I told her, 'I can't handle it, I can't handle the kids, the other kids,' they were really nasty. And right to this day, I meet some of these kids that said the nasty things to me and everything, and...

Jennylee Olesek –Sault Ste. Marie

When we were smaller growing up, it wasn't any fun to have even an ounce of Indian blood, you just were different, you know, yeah you were treated differently. I know that when we were little, my brother was always, he was younger than me, but we used to, kids used to tease us and get into fights, and I always used to get in there to help him out.

Ed and Barb Pine –Sault Ste. Marie

B: Well I think back in the fifties and sixties that we were just, I don't think they thought we were serious, I think that they thought we were something that was there, and if we don't talk about it, it'll go away. But we didn't go away, and we've come a long way, and we didn't go away. I can remember in my own childhood back several times having to actually physically fight because I was, I never denied my heritage, and I had my son, I taught him to always be proud of his, and he's had to have a few little scraps, and he went to school over here at what was Finlayson at the time, kids would laugh at you, but, you know, and then now our kids are very proud to be called Native Americans. I think we've come a long way.

Philma Leazier –St. Ignace

She put me in the Catholic school, and so there was a difference there of culture. She would tell me about the Indian ways of Medicine Men and tobacco, and she would tell me about stories about bear-walking. And I would say to her, 'you put me in the Catholic school, and the sisters don't want us to talk about medicine men, don't want us to talk about your Indian culture,' so I said, the sisters kind of took that away from me, because we differed then. See I was raised in the Catholic school right up to the 11th grade, so we couldn't believe in God and believe in a medicine man, and believe in a different culture. So I was kind of, I don't know how you would say it, kind of brainwashed away from the Indian culture.