

Jeremy Roberts

Seventeen

A Dangerous Job

"I enjoy music, I enjoy hunting, fishing and I do spend a lot of time at my cottage on Big Perch Lake." That is what my eighty-year old grandpa said when I asked him what he enjoys doing.

My grandpa, Earl Roberts was born in National Mine in 1913. His parents were Samual and Bessie Roberts. He had a brother Leslie and two sisters, Ruth and Leddie. My grandma died thirteen years ago. He had four children. They are Dale, Lance, Kevin and Mary Rundman.

My grandpa worked in the mining industry for thirty-six years.

He had many relatives who worked in the mine. Some of them included a grandfather, many cousins and uncles, and two sons. He started working for the mine because the wages were real good. All through the years he claims he never felt like changing his career because of the good pay, and he felt the job was secure.

The Brownstone Shops, the Cliff Shaft Mine and the Republic Mine were some of the places he worked, and he performed many different duties. The first year working, he was hired as a painter. After that he went to the Cliff Shaft Mine to work on the motors, and then he became a miner. After several years he became a shift supervisor. He was in charge of the contracts, motor crews, timbermen, and laborers. Some of the equipment they used were underground motors for hauling the ore and drilling machines. Working at the mines could be pretty dangerous. Grandpa himself and other family experienced these dangers.

My grandpa recalled a very dangerous situation. He was mining, and several tons of ore fell off a pillar about fifteen feet from him. Another time my grandpa was digging ore from a chute with a bar and a chunk of ore came down and hit one end of the bar causing the other end to come up and hit him in the jaw which fractured his jaw and knocked out teeth. My grandpa's great-uncle, Sam Roberts was a captain at a Republic Mine and went down with the shift boss and the superintendant to check things and on the way down the brakes let go and all of them lost their lives. Sam's son, William was killed in a cave in. My grandpa's uncle and a brother-in-law both died at mines.

My grandpa was an instructor in a program called H.O.B.S.O. which stood for How Our Business System Operates. He said, "I enjoyed this very much."

Looking back, my grandpa saw co-workers as wonderful people. He claims lots of tricks were played but all in good fun.

My grandpa figures there will always be a demand for iron ore and the companies will continue to produce as long as they can make a profit. He also believes that the Cleveland-Cliffs and the other companies have been the basis for the economy for a hundred years or more.