

Jake UHL

Thirty

From 1943 till 1994.

Mr. Stan Moilanen was born in the fall of 1943, during a big storm in the Copper Country. He was an only child. His father, Elfred Moilanen, worked in the copper mines and later drove truck for Lindberg and Sons.

Stan recalls living in Illinois when he heard about the Tilden Mine opening in Ishpeming, Michigan. He said that he was one of the first men to apply. He was hired, drove truck, ran the shovels and is now an auto mechanic.

Stan discusses his present job talking about how they work the bull crew, where they go over the list of things that need to be fixed. The work is done after they go over it in the inspection.

Stan describes some of the machinery that he uses at the mine, explaining that they have big drills that drill fifteen foot holes fifty feet deep. The holes are filled with powder and blow up the dirt. Stan talks about their new shovels--the biggest one is a thirteen yard bucket. He says that when he started working for CCI, the trucks were only eighty-five tons. Trucks progressed to 120, then a 170, and now there are some 190 ton trucks at the Tilden Mine and 240 ton trucks at the Empire. There was a similar increase in the size of the loaders. Stan explained that when he started out, the company had a loader with a one and a half yard bucket. Next came a loader with a

thirteen yard bucket. At the Tilden there is a big CAT and a dresser four thousand is at the Empire and both loaders have a eighteen yard bucket. The equipment is just getting bigger and bigger!

When I asked what was the most difficult task he did, Stan said that it was probably when he works on something he has not done before because he never knows when a spring might come flying out. It's also difficult being a shovel operator making new roads because mud sticks to every thing. He recalled that when he was on the blasting crew, he and many others would get a little scared.

When I asked what was the most unique thing he had ever seen, he laughed and said that when he and his partner were going to service a truck one night as they walked to where the trucks were parked they saw a doe giving birth to her fawn, but as soon as the fawn hit the ground a fox grabbed the fawn and ran away with it.

Stan said that working in a mine is not always a pleasure due to the noise and dirt. When the door is opened, it gets awful dusty. It's hot in the summer and cold in the winter but a worker gets used to it.

When asked what the safety standards are, Stan replied by saying that there used to be an award if a worker went through a time period without any accidents. Safety standards are changing constantly but they are getting better.

So working in the mine is not so bad after all but if you are thinking about working in the mine now is the time to start. But however, make sure you finish school first before starting to work.