

Alison Hebel

Seventy-Five

"A LITTLE BIT AHEAD OF THE GAME"

"I worked in the Lloyd Mine, the Mather A and B mines, and then I worked at the General Shop," stated Mr. Myles Marietti of Ishpeming Michigan.

Mr. Marietti was born on March 17, 1919, to Bartholemew and Vernadina Marietti. His dad was a miner, and his mother was a homemaker. Mr. Marietti grew up with seven sisters and four brothers.

Mr. Marietti continued to tell about some of the duties he has performed during his career as a miner. While working in the mine for over forty years, Mr. Marietti had jobs that ranged from welding, and fabricating, to working with blueprints.

When I asked Mr. Marietti about any special jobs he had performed he told me: "We were assigned to the job at the Humbolt Mine to build a mine 62 feet across, and 12 feet high with machines that were brand new on the job," replied Mr. Marietti.

Over the years Mr. Marietti recalled the duties of his job change as more machinery was implemented. Mr. Marietti continued telling me of the duties he performed for CCI. "Just about every job underground," said Mr. Marietti, recalling his work as an underground miner. After working underground, Mr. Marietti went to a school in Marquette, Michigan although he can not remember the name of it. The school taught welding. He worked with welding materials for eighteen years. At this time that Mr.

Marietti was welding, the Empire Mine was just starting up.

On the job Mr. Marietti used equipment such as welding machines, breakthrough bending the metal, shears which are used for cutting the metal, and rolls for forming it.

"Well I've broken bones, fingers, and a leg," says Mr. Marietti recalling any accidents that have happened to him. "What people don't understand is that safety is their job too. You can't have a guy watching you all of the time," stated Mr. Marietti, while telling me about some safety standards.

Although Mr. Marietti had some dangerous situations above and belowground, he still enjoyed his job. Some of the reasons Mr. Marietti liked his job so much was "That was the most advantageous, well-paying job." Other reasons are; It was close to home, and there were some pretty good guys there."

After hearing that his co-workers were pretty good guys, Mr. Marietti told me a story of a man who was trying to put his winter underwear on. "This old timer was trying to put his winter underwear on. He had one sleeve inside out. He turned that one and turned the other one back the other way. It took him about ten minutes to get his underwear on," Mr. Marietti said laughingly.

Mr. Marietti mainly worked with men but there were some women on the job. "Some of them even work out in where it used to be miner's and men's jobs. They have taken over a lot and done a pretty good job of it," is how Mr. Marietti stated his opinion of his women co-workers.

After hearing about the men and women Mr. Marietti worked with, he went on saying what the future workers and students need to do to become employed by Cleveland Cliffs Iron Co. "They have

to go to school, and get an education. So that they know if they are given the job, and they are told something. They can figure it out by themselves if there is nobody around because there isn't going to be anybody there all the time," he explained.

Mr. Marietti told me some of his opinions and insights about the future of mining in general. For the Tilden and Empire mines, Mr. Marietti thought they would both be all right as long as they stay competitive. "They are competitive right now. They've got a good bunch running them and they're upgrading their machinery all the time. Now the workers have a six year contract, so that would give them a chance to keep things going for a longer period of time," he stated.

For CCI to remain competitive, Mr. Marietti thought that they have to keep a little bit ahead of the game at all times.

While looking far into the future, Mr. Marietti told me how the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company would be remembered. "I think they'll go down in a period of history where they'll be remembered." Mr. Marietti felt this way because it was not only the people who worked that kept the mines going, but the people who did not work for CCI too.

Being a member of the United Steelworkers' Union, Mr. Marietti had very interesting information about strikes. One big strike happened in the year of 1946, but Mr. Marietti was not involved in it because he was in the service at that time.

Mr. Marietti remembers being in one strike but at the most he was only in two. According to Mr. Marietti, strikes begin when workers can not agree on a contract with management. "You're negotiating for labor, wages and stuff like that," he explained. A strike usually involves everyone who belongs to the

union, which includes all of the hourly workers.

After talking to Mr. Marietti about strikes, he continued to explain to me why there is a picket line and what happens there. "A picket line is just a show of force that you are serious about the strike that you're going for and what you think is right."

Talking with Mr. Marietti about his working days has been very interesting. Now at the age of seventy-five, Mr. Marietti lives with his wife Lila in the house he has lived in since he was four years old. Mr. Marietti has told me many things about mines I never knew before. He had very interesting memories. I am glad he shared them with me.