

Deanna Kauppila

SEVENTY-THREE

U.P. MINING

Soini Saari was born on July 13, 1916, in Republic Michigan. He has one sister, one brother, and two half-brothers. Mr. Saari has four daughters and one son. Mr. Saari's father also worked in the mines.

"Well there really wasn't much around then, and I worked in the woods for some years, found out the mine was a steadier place to work, pay was better," replied Mr. Saari as I asked him why he chose his job. Back when he started his job did not require any special training. "You just got trained right on the job," he said.

Mr. Saari was employed in the iron industry for over thirty-two years. He started out working in the Mather A and Mather B mines, and from there he went on to work in the Republic Mine for the remainder of his career.

During his career he did such things as taking samples of ore to see how high the iron content was to laborer duties which involved keeping the area clean. "The most difficult part was when something would plug up," said Mr. Saari. Once this happened it took a long time to get things going again. Mr. Saari worked both above and underground. But regardless of where he was, he explained the conditions were very noisy and dirty.

Safety was always just as important on the job. Mr. Saari

won safety awards over the years for practicing safe work habits.

Working in the mines was not all just hard labor. People you worked with became friends. As Mr. Saari mentioned, "There

were lots of fun times and there was joking around at times."

People on the job were not always satisfied with what they had. If they wanted something changed, they would have union members negotiate things that they wanted changed. If the company disagreed it could result in a strike. Mr. Saari has been on strike three or four times over the years. The steelworkers union helped Mr. Saari and other workers achieve good working conditions and it gave them good standards of living.

When Mr. Saari was beginning his job he did not receive any special training; he just got trained right on the job. Today is different as Mr. Saari explained to me that the students of today should study hard and get good grades because today is a lot more competitive.

"There's not gonna be any big boom times, they will keep going. Our country needs steel, they will be okay," said Mr. Saari as I asked him his opinion on what the future will hold for the iron and steel industry. Mr. Saari feels that for CCI to remain competitive. You have to make sure your efficient and the work force has to be more productive and keep striving to get more work from everyone. The key to the success of CCI is that they have a good work.

Mr. Saari is now retired and enjoys reading and going for walks on his spare time. Mr. Saari just is satisfied with his life. "It's just been a good life," said Mr. Saari.