

Beau Bushong  
interview

Lloyd Bushong  
February 22, 1993

me: I'd like to start off with one question.

me: When and where were you born?

Lloyd: I was born in Clair, Michigan, May 6, 1955.

me: When did you move to the U.P.?

Lloyd: We moved to the U.P. in approximately 1960.

me: What were your parents names?

Lloyd: My father's name ~~is~~ is Earl Bushong and my mother name is Gloriana Bushong.

me: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Lloyd: Yup. I have 3 sisters Sandy, Jessie and Sheila and two brothers Lee, Leslie.

me: Were you married? (2)

Gloyd: Yes, I've been married for 18 years

me: Where were you married?

Gloyd: We were married in Ishpeming at St. John's church in 1975.

me: What is your spouse's name?

Gloyd: Diana Bushong.

me: What did your parents do for a living?

Gloyd: My mother was a homemaker and my father was a constructing boilermaker for 37 years.

me: Where did you go to school?

Gloyd: I went to <sup>school</sup> in Ishpeming, I graduated from Ishpeming high school in 1973.

me: What special memories do you have of growing up in this area?

Gloyd: Well, I think growing up in Ishpeming was a good experience for me as a young boy, because the town was quite, the people were friendly and it was a nice place to grow up.

me: What special features stand out in your mind about the city of Ishpeming and Nequamee from when you were younger?

George: Well, I guess the special features that stand<sup>3</sup> out were the community relationships and especially as a school boy were the rivalries. The competitive rivalry, between sports teams, between Ishpeming and Negaunee. That created a lot of excitement in the two cities.

Me: How have these cities changed?

George: Well, I think the downtown areas of both Ishpeming and Negaunee have deteriorated dramatically from when I was a young boy in high school and in the younger grades. Back then we had stores downtown in Ishpeming that serviced just about any need you wanted and now all those stores or most of the stores are gone. Now everybody goes to Marquette to do most of their shopping in the big malls and stuff down there or in Green Bay. I think that's really hurt the downtown environment.

me: What kind of things did you and your friends do when you were a teenager for entertainment?

Lloyd: Well most of my time as a teenager was tied up in sports activity. I tried to stay in sports to stay active there, but, we went out and socialized, played pool, rode our bikes, worked on our cars when we got old enough to drive, rode motorbikes, things like that.

Me: Sounds like fun!

me: Where did the kids like to hang-out in town when you were a teenager?

Lloyd: Well were most of the kids hang-out especially in my younger age preteens ~~early~~ teens there used to be a place called Norpi's pizza which was were most of the hoods hang-out in town and then as we got older the big hang-out in town was the Congress bars that were all kids would hang-out, most often you could go in the congress at night on a Friday and Saturday night and it would take you 20 minutes to walk from one end to another cause it would be so packed with kids

me: Do you have any humorous or interesting stories to share about these early days in Ishpeming?

⑤

Royd: Well, I guess interesting. Uh-huh & talk about  
Norpi's pizza was the hoods we used to  
have back then. Those were the tough guys  
around town. They would wear the white  
T-shirts and the black pants like levis. The  
belts with the buckles on the side of  
their hips. They would be the ones that would  
always be smoking a cigarette those were  
the tough guys around town, those were  
the hoods. Those were the interesting things.

me: How old were you when you found your  
first job and where did you work?

Royd: Well, when I had my first job, job, I was  
about 17 years old and I work in the  
gas fields. I used to spend my summers  
down state with my cousin in Mt. Pleasant. When  
he went on a vacation I replaced him for  
2 weeks working in the gasfields and  
that was a very interesting job for a young boy  
my age to be able to go out and work with  
the big guys. Work on such a dangerous job  
right off of the bat. It was fun. It was  
exciting.

me: What types of duties did perform while  
you were working in the gasfields

Blayzel: Well the main part of our jobs was ⑥  
to go into the gas wells and we'd  
have to clean out the pipes that ran down  
into the earth they would pump  
the old oil fields dry and then they  
would fill oil field cavities below  
the ground full of natural gas. So  
we had to go in and keep the pipes  
clean. We'd have to do what <sup>w'd</sup> ~~be~~ spudding  
them out. We'd run tools down  
the pipes and clean out all the debris  
in the pipes, then when we weren't  
doing that we had to move from  
one well ~~location~~ location to  
the next. In the off time it was my  
duty to clean the rig with fuel oil  
and a rag and we'd keep the rig  
clean cause it was kind of a dirty  
job there was a lot of mud and stuff  
around. It was basically generally  
labor type work.

me: What stands out most in your mind about  
your job working at the gas fields?

Lloyd:

Well, I guess the danger of the job was one aspect of it because you working with highly volatile material under a lot of pressure and also when you get your first paycheck from a real paying job that what real sticks out in your mind especially when it is a good paying job makes you feel good for the job that you did. <sup>7</sup>

me:

How many total years did you work in your lifetime?

Lloyd:

Well, I worked for a total of 20 years know in my lifetime.

me:

OK. During your lifetime where were you employed the longest?

Lloyd:

Well my longest employment has been as a construction worker, working as a boilermaker I started just after I graduated in 1973 and I'm still a construction boilermaker today so I guess the last 20 years has been my long job.

Me: Why did you choose this life as a  
boilermaker? (8)

Harold: Well when I grew up my dad was a  
boilermaker, my uncle was a boilermaker,  
my cousin was a boilermaker and I guess  
it was just a fact life that is was  
going to be a boilermaker because  
that is what I was told since I was a  
little boy.

me: In as much details as you can please  
describe the main duties of a boilermaker?

Harold: The main duty of a boilermaker is as  
the name would indicate to build  
boilers. Boilers are high pressure technical  
pieces of equipment that you find anywhere  
from school houses to large industrial  
facilities. They generate heat, generate steam  
generate the power for a lot of processing  
mills but it goes far beyond that. A constructing  
boilermaker builds pollution control equipment  
large pieces of equipment a good part of  
our jurisdiction or job description involve  
work in the mine, plants like Tilden and The Empire



(9)

I spent many years at those two locations building different pieces of equipment so those plants could operate. So I guess we cover a large gammat of different of the construction industry out there.

me: As a boilermaker is there any special training needed?

Lloyd: Yes, I went through a 4 year apprenticeship program that is comparable to a 4 year college degree program where you have to learn blue print reading, you have to be adept or professional in drafting, you have to learn how to rig heavy pieces in place, safety is extensively taught in the apprenticeship program, plus high pressure welding, which is one of the more critical areas of our work. We have to be able to pass a welding test that requires X-ray type certification to weld together tubes that carry inside of them over 25 hundred pounds per square inch of pressure.

me: What special equipment or clothing did you use as a boilermaker? (10)

Floyd: Well, we always had to wear hard hats, safety glasses, ear plugs, those types of safety equipment. You wear a lot of leather clothing when you are welding or are gauging or burning you have to wear heavy gloves. So the safety equip. is quite extensive.

me: Was there any special rules or regulations?

Floyd: Oh, yeh, were governed by a lot of rules and regulations in the construction industry. O.S.H.A. which is the occupational safety health act and also my O.S.H.A. which is Michigan's act that deals with the same thing. It spells out clearly and concisely what you can and can't do in construction sites when you are working high and working with different types of tools and application there is a lot of safety features involved.

me: What was the most rewarding part of your career?

Hayd: Well, I guess the most rewarding part of my career was becoming a graduate apprentice and a full pledged journey men boilermaker and as I grew in my trade I got better at it to know and understand that I was a good boilermaker and that I was a competent efficient boilermaker

me: What was the most challenging part of your job?

Hayd: Oh, the most challenging part of my job was about 9 years ago when I became the business agent for our local union. ah. right out of the field as a construction boilermaker being put into a position of leadership and trying to adjust to that hole new environment. From a construction worker in the field to basically a business man in a office was quite a challenge.

me: How did the duties for you as a boilermaker change over the years?

loyd: Well, the duties change over the years for me cause I was fresh out of high school and didn't know a lot about boilermaking. I had to learn the whole aspect through the apprenticeship program and everytime you learned something there was always a ~~return~~ challenge you had to take up and like becoming a certified welder, which meant more employment and more employability, your skills were better utilized that way and then becoming a forming on the jobs, and then becoming a general forming on jobs. So there was always a challenge ahead of you. Once you get over one hurdle there was always another one there that would confront you.

me: Did any other of you family members work for the same company?

loyd: Well, for our local union like I said earlier my father was a boilermaker my uncle was a boilermaker, my cousin was a boilermaker and now my brother is a boilermaker, brother-in-law is a boilermaker. So we have quite a history of boilermaking in our family.

me: Did your boilermaking job put you in any dangerous situations?

Hayd: Oh, all the time the constructing industry is ~~through~~ with danger out there. Their always watching out for the other guy, what he is doing, making sure what he is doing is safe because he might not injure himself, but sometimes he can injure you and in the construction industry there is a lot of deaths that occur because of people not paying ~~attention~~ attention to their safety training. Also, working high in the air, we do a lot of high work as a boilermaker sometimes I've been up as high as 400 hundred to 800 feet in the air working off of structural steel, that can present you with some very precarious situations.

me: Was there anything that happened to you during your job?

Hayd: No, I can't say that I was ever in a serious accident, but there was one time when I was working at one of the mine rights and a heavy piece of ice fell of a piece of equipment and came down on top of my head and shattered the hard-hat that was on my head. Fortunately for me I was in pretty good physical condition at that time, and took the blow fairly well. I still feel the results of the impact today.

me: Please describe what some of your co-workers (9)  
were like?

Lloyd: Well, the boilermakers years ago are a lot different than they are today. Years ago the old-timers, they used to party all night long. Then they'd come to work and work hard all day long and they would do that day in and day out. But, the construction worker today is more sophisticated better educated, ~~the~~ training is a ~~major~~<sup>major</sup> important factor in the construction boilermaker today. We emphasize education in all of our apprenticeship that we look for math skills, technical drafting skills, computers literacy, basic are all incorporated into the trade today. So we have some pretty sophisticated, highly trained professionals in our industry today, much different than it was 20 or 30 years ago. When you could fly by the seat of your pants.

me: Did you have any humorous or interesting events that happened during your career?

Floyd: Oh, I guess life in the construction industry  
 is one big humorous event you get to  
 travel all over the country if you  
 want to, you can see different people all the  
 time, see different personalities all the  
 time, working in different environments  
 all the time. I can recall working  
 it temp. 50 below zero at the Humboldt mine  
 back in 1977. The I can remember working  
 near or around running boilers that are  
 700' temp in the environ, that you're working in.  
 There always the funny parts when you  
 see guys do funny things or you see guys  
 get picked on at certain times just all  
 in good fun though. But I can't pick  
 out one particular time though that  
 we had interesting or funny events its all  
 been interesting or funny meeting new  
 people all the time that's interesting.  
 me: At any time did you feel like changing your job?

Floyd: Oh, yep there has times in the last couple years when I thought about changing my job opportunities how come up and gone, that I've looked at very seriously but I've stayed with cause I guess I am a boilermaker at heart, and I do enjoy the profession.

me: What were some of your biggest responsibilities as a boilermaker?

Floyd: Oh, as a boilermaker I guess some of my biggest responsibilities were doing my job well taking pride in what you do and knowing what your doing well that is prob. your biggest responsibility. then as you get to be a foreman you have to make sure everything is put together right, or there always a problem with it if it is not and that falls on your shoulder and looking out for the safety of your men, sometimes you have 100 guys working for you, planning out the job then as I grew in my career became a business agent



looking out for the welfare of some 75 to 80 boiler makers and their families so you talking about a couple of hundred people that you have to look out for their best interest in welfare try to make sure that they can earn a decent living and support their family there is a lot of pressure and that working 7 days a week 24 hours a day all the time.

me: Did you receive any special awards from your employer?

Floyd: No, I haven't received any special awards from my employer. I guess the biggest award I received in my career is being recognized by my peers as a good leader.

me: During your days of employment and beyond what have been your favorite hobbies and leisure activities?

Floyd: Oh, I guess my favorite hobby of all time is deer hunting. I enjoy that most of all. November 15. is a very special day to me. But I enjoy getting hunting, fishing and skiing all kinds of outdoor sporting activities.

Hoyd: Camping in the summer with my sons, taking them out doing a little fishing those kinds of things. Those are the things I really like to do.

me: Do you have any special stories about them?

Hoyd: Oh, special stories I can remember when Beau my youngest son caught the big fish up on Lake Independence. The 5 pound bass. He was pretty proud of that at that time. Then when he shot his first buck out of dad's deer blind that was a pretty special time.

me: Have you been involved in any clubs, organizations, or sport leagues?

Hoyd: Oh, yep I been active in the Ishpeming city league mens basketball for 15 years know played every year in that. Also I am a member of the Elba Youth Committee and ever's worked hard to put on different programs for the kids one of our favorite programs is the all-night graduation

party for the seniors graduating from  
Isipemung High School we had that program  
now for 7 or 8 years. it's a non-alcoholic program  
we see a lot of benefit and gratitude to that  
program.

me: Do have any special moments that stand  
out about this aspect of your life?

Gloyd: Oh. yeh I guess the special moments are  
just working with the kids and giving them  
the opportunity to enjoy themselves, giving  
them something to do ~~that's it~~. One of these  
things like living in rural area like this there isn't  
a lot for the kids to do it's unfortunate but  
we try to do what we can.

me: Overall what were your fondest memories of  
your working days and your career?

Gloyd: I guess the fondest memories of my working  
days are just meeting many different people  
that I've had the good fortune to meet  
very high level pros. just right down to good  
long lasting friendships you develop with your  
co-workers.

(20)  
me: Are you a member of a Union?

Gloyd: Yeh, I've been a member of a union since 1973 and proud of it.

me: Which one?

Gloyd: Boilermakers local 169

me: Please describe any interesting memories that include as a member of a union?

Gloyd: Oh, it just the brotherhood of belonging to a organization that everyone looks out to each other trying to make sure there all taking care of. I guess my most special moment of all that I can remember right now is graduating and becoming a graduated apprentice and a journey man boilermaker. That was the biggest accomplishment I've had in my life I guess today. Then when we first were elected into office to become leadership in the local union. That was also a big moment.

me: If you had to do it all over again would you ~~choose~~ the same career?

Hayd: Ah, I think I would. If I had to do it all over again one thing I would do first I would make sure I continued my education out of high school and go to college and get my degree but I don't now I was pre-destined to be a boilermaker.

me: In closing, do you have anything else you would like to add?

Hayd: No, I guess not. I just wish all kids would do their best when they're in school cause when they grow into their life and career they'll look back and think there is something more they could have done in their educational life or life to better prepare themselves. So do what you can to the best of your ability while you're in school that's the only thing I could people know a large me. Thank you for time for this interview.