

me: This is Jim Carello & I am interviewing Buck Johnson at National Mine School & we are in the elementary library on 2/10/93.

me: Buck is a County Road Commission Worker that has recently retired.

me: When & where were you born?

Buck: I was born in Uspeminy Sept. 25, 1931 in his grandparents home.

me: What were your grandparents' names?

Buck: My father's name was Raymond & mother Elizabeth.

me: What were the names of your brothers & sisters?

Buck: I have eight sisters & two brothers. They are all living except my older bro.

me: Were you married or are you married & how many yrs.

Buck: Yes I'm married to Alice Annala for 39 yrs.

me: What did your parents do?

Buck: My father was a miner & my mother was a house wife.

me: Where did you go to school?

Buck: I went to school at Dixit Elementary.

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

Buck: Well mostly outdoors I guess we did everything outdoors fishing & hunting & trapping makes an occasional ball game with da group if we had time

me: What special features stick out in your mind about  
Upemung & Negunee

Buck: Well when I was young there was a lot of small stores in  
the town a lot more like clothing stores & small grocery stores  
now its gone into the big supermarkets, its a big change.

me: Yes, like the mall & other places.

Buck: Yes, we have the mall out on the highway now for all that  
shopping & then all the big supermarket stores for groceries.

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

Buck: Well we had a youth center at that time & the famous ice  
cream parlor, the old Brown Derby a lot of kids hung around  
in there.

me: Do you have any interesting or humorous stories to tell about these  
days?

Buck: I guess buying the gas was the main thing, I guess if you could  
loan a car or if you had enough money for gas that's what the thing to  
do was to just ride the main street back & forth.

me: How old were you when you got your first job & where did you work

Buck: I was 15 yrs. old when I was working steady. I worked for Harmon  
Bro. logging they were north of Upemung. They were both teachers  
for the district at that time & I drove team & cut pulp for them.

me: Do you remember any hard times like I know you don't always get  
as much as you want in a bigger family.

Buck: Well we didn't really call them hard times. We didn't have anything  
fancy you'd don't have a dozen pairs of pants & shirts but we  
always ate well & we were clean, no bed we didn't have all the  
luxuries in them days.

me: What types of duties did you perform on your job.

Back: Well when I worked in the woods I was cutting pulp & sheeling logs.

me: Were you ever in the military.

Back: I was in the military in 1953 through 1955 I took basic at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri & week in Fort Worth Texas & then I spent 19 months in England I was connected with the anti aircraft on the air force base there.

me: Is there any special stories you would like to add about that.

Back: Well there was nothing special there it was just that we were connected with the anti aircraft that it was very active.

me: During your lifetime where were you employed the longest?

Back: I was employed for 16 1/2 years for the county Rec. Commission the longest I worked for 32 1/2 years total.

me: How or why did you choose this career?

Back: Well there weren't that many jobs at that time for a person who didn't have any education so you either had to do something like that or work in the mine so I could not get into the mine at that time so I chose that.

me: Was it harder to get an education in those days?

Back: It was, most of the big families when you got of age you got out & worked to help raise the family so it was harder to get an education at that time yes.

me: In as much detail as possible please describe the main duties of this job?

Book: Well I started out as just a laborer that's just handwork. ④  
 & after a few yrs. I started driving truck & I worked my way up  
 to running heavy equipment & it was quite rewarding once you  
 get up to the heavy equipment.

me: What special equipment or clothing was required for the job?

Book: Well you had to work in heavy equipment work hat hard toe boots &  
 good work clothing especially if you were out plowing in the  
 winter time the older trucks the heaters were terrible in them we  
 used to rub the windshields with the piston to keep them clear they  
 used to ice up so bad?

me: What was the oldest plow they owned & did you have a designated  
 plow?

Book: We had some of the plows were close to the 40 needles when it  
 started they were the best it was hard hitting they were all  
 adjustable seats in them it was like sitting on a bench driving them.  
 & they were cold like I say you couldn't enjoy yourself much  
 in them.

me: Did this job have any special rules or regulations that you have  
 to follow?

Book: I guess the most important thing was you had to be on time &  
 when a situation came that you had to work overtime to keep  
 the roads clear they wanted you to stay there until another shift  
 came on that was the responsibility there.

me: Did you have many long shifts?

Book: Yes I worked many long shifts sometimes we would work over a 12 hour  
 shift even but they tried to keep where one shift would release  
 the other.

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

Buck: I suppose the most rewarding part was when I was promoted to supervision after 7 yrs of driving trucks & running heavy equipment

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

Buck: To go into supervision it's a big challenge to go from working with the men to go out & tell them what to do & supervise them with a lot of responsibility & stress when you start into this

me: Did you have to supervise schedules & routes?

Buck: That's right you supervise each plow & there turn & when they finished up you had to have a list of one that they could help.

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

Buck: My youngest brother Robert he worked for - a local construction company & mechanic at the shops.

me: What ages relatives?

Buck: Well say Bob's about 50 now.

me: How many brothers do you have?

Buck: Bob's only, only, Harry & other.

me: Did your job feel like many dangerous situations?

Buck: Yes only that it go out on the highway. Even if it's just a patch drive, it's dangerous on the highway with the increase in traffic & so forth.

me: At any time during your job did you feel like with the years?

Buck: Yes I would have liked to have been an inspector or making big bucks doing mining but discussed with the family & decided to stay there.

me: could you describe some interesting or humorous events in your career?

Boch: Mostly pranks, kidding about the billing expertise of someone losing spread of gravel & left it in one pile he didn't forget about it

me: Do you remember anyone getting hurt on the job?

Boch: Yes one of my drivers awhile back was driving on the W. road a pickup truck passed him & lost control & hit the front of the plow & he pulled over on to the side to see if he was ok. a car came & couldn't stop & slid right into him & knocked him about twenty-five feet onto the snowbank he only suffered a broken leg out of it

me: What were your biggest responsibilities on the job?

Boch: To keep the roads safe & sanded down for the public

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

Boch: They have a 25 yr clock when every year get 25 yr on the job you get a watch every year coming in they receive a gold watch for 25 yr service. Every 4 yr. they have a lunch lunch & pass out watches to all the new workers.

me: Do they like any Christmas parties?

Boch: Yes we had parties sponsored by the union we served alcohol & what we had but they if we would hire ahead & have a Christmas party for the whole county. We were about 80 members & had had quit a group whenever had a party.

me: During your days of employment & beyond what have been your favorite hobbies or activities?

Buck: Hunting & the biggest story about it or I suppose you want me to tell a tall tale. I always tell the one of when I was hunting & I went down in the Big Bar area & I shot this big buck that came my way in a watching place & I knew I had killed him good & I followed him away & I lost him & the next year I went in there hunting the same place & this deer came back & I thought it was the same deer so I shot him again & I went down so when we cleaned the deer out we come to find out the deer had two hearts & I shot him through on the previous year but this time I got him in the second heart so that was one of the big stories.

me: How many points did it have?

Buck: I think it had about 18 then was so many that time I wasn't very well educated & couldn't count them all almost.

me: Have you ever been involved in any clubs?

Buck: Usually we were in cub scouts when the children were growing up & we brought them to the school activities when are children were going through athletics in the school system so we'd belong to the booster club for years.

me: How many children do you have?

Buck: I have three children a son and two daughters my son is 34 & my daughters are 32 & 31.

me: Were you a member of a union if so what one?

Buck: I was in fact I was responsible for organizing the traps union & that was in the shops.

me: Please describe any interesting moments when you were in work?

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Buck: On the strike after we first joined the union we had  
are big strike that was in the early 60s I think and  
was the first strike ever for the national council of education

me: Did you win the strike? & how long were you on strike?

Buck: We were on strike for about a week but it was fortunate for  
them that they did have a big snow storm.

me: If you had to do it all over again would you choose to have  
career?

Buck: No, I think if I had to do it all over again I would try something  
hard it was to get an education, I would like to have a professional  
career & seeing all my friends & seeing their lives being professional people.

me: What would you have liked to have been?

Buck: I would have liked to have been an engineer a mechanical engineer.

me: In closing would you have anything else that you would like to add.

Buck: I would like to tell all of the young students that don't pass up the golden  
opportunity that they have to get an education now keep your nose to the  
grind stone because everything is demanding out there now even to  
get a job driving a truck you have to have an education this is what  
I would advise all the young students to do?

me: Thanks;