

Paul Haapala's
interview with Donnie Byykkonen.

Me: I'm Paul Haapala and I'm interviewing Donnie Byykkonen
On November 29, 1993 on iron mining... at his home

Me: When and where were you born?

Mr. B: I was born in ^{Huron} town, Michigan on April 11th 1931

Me: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. B: Abel and ^{Lillian} Lillian

Me: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. B: Well my dad did a number of things he was a
woodworker and a miner he went back and forth
from being a woodworker a miner and a part time
farmer.

Me: Oh

Me: What are the names of your brothers and
sisters?

Mr. B: ~~4~~ I have four brothers and two sisters,
The oldest one is Gertrude the next is Robert and
then our sister Eva brothers Roy, David and Bruce.

Me: Are you currently married, if so what is
your spouse's name?

Mr. B: My wife's name is ~~Herna~~ Herna Verna

Me: What are the names of your children?

Mr. B: I have five children, Roxanne, Glenn, Runita, Jerry and Rhonda.

Me: How long have you been working in the iron industry?

Mr. B: I worked in the iron industry for 30 years. ←

Me: Why did you choose to work in the iron industry?

Mr. B: Well I think the reason I chose working in the iron industry was because I didn't want to leave the U. P. and at the time, at that time when I was 20 years old I liked the U. P. and mines paid the best money and work was available at that time. ✓
include + good

Me: ~~hmm~~ hmm

Me: Could you name those relatives who have worked in the iron industry?

Mr. B: Yes, my dad worked here my two brothers worked here, and two or three cousins worked here also one brother-in-law.

Me: hmm

Me: What are the names of the various mines or buildings you have worked at?

Mr. B: I started working underground at the Mathes A

Mr. B: (continued) I worked there approximately 7 years,
I worked about a year and a half at the ^{ore} ~~ore~~ ^{concent}
Improvement(?) plant. I worked one winter at Humboldt.
I worked approximately eighteen years
or so in Republic. And the rest of the time
at the Hidden Mine.

Me: Over the years what kind of duties have you performed for CCI?

Mr. B: Well, I started off as an underground laborer, at the
Mather A, as a motor man at the Mather A,
I was a diamond drill helper, and I also was
a stove scraper(?) man, and I took up welding
at the Mather A. And the rest of the time with
my service at CCI I was a maintenance
welder.

Me: OK

Me: In as much detail as possible please describe the main duties of your current job, if retired please describe the duties of the job you held.

Mr. B: Well being a maintenance welder I repaired
a lot of things including the big shovels in
the pit, all the big trucks, and the graters, small
trucks, all the drills, and anything that was
involved with maintenance in the pit. I also
worked at the _____ plant on big kilns. I also
worked on pipelines, steamlines, air lines and

include
found

Mr. B: (cont.) whatever was involved in maintenance welding.

Me: Did this job require any special training or higher education?

Mr. B: Yeah, I took a 6 week welding course first hoping I could get into some sort of trade and luck would have it at the (Mathe) A they posted for two welders and I did the posting and I was able to get on as a welder trainee. The training program took four years and in those four years time *in class* we had to take a number of different things which involved maths a correspondence class which involved math, blue print reading, shop calculations, and so on and we also had a bunch of actual work we had to pass I think it was about twelve or more involved at that time.

Me: Please describe any special machinery or equipment you used on the job.

Mr. B: Well I think most of the machinery we used on the job was actually ^{we had} welders and air equipment such as grinders and _____ and so on. also to work on the job we used

Mr. B: (cont.) such things as a manlift to get to our work, we used cranes and possibly boom trucks and so on to do our lifting for us. and I think that's about all.

Me: What is the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

Mr. B: I think the most challenging part of my job and difficult part sometimes as we worked out in the pit and so on ~~was~~ we worked high of the ground. ^{include} I would say at times we probably inbetween 50 and 70 feet in height. so that was probably the most challenging part.

Me: Thinking back over the years, what was the most challenging or difficult duty you had to perform? and explain why?

Mr. B: I think the most difficult duty I think was at the Republic Mine, or the challenging duty was that we had two trucks get wrecked over there one went over the dump and the rear back-end of the truck got wrecked pretty bad. the next one went over some

Mr. B: (cont) ^{check these} sort of burn(?) or swan(?) and the front
end got wrecked, and the first truck
was ^{shipped} ~~sent~~ to Iron Mountain to get fixed they
were able to get a new frame for it the
second truck was brought to Iron Mountain
to get fixed and they would ~~not~~ of had to
wait two years ~~to get it fixed~~ for the frame for
delivery! So my partner and I were brought
in and told we want a ^{new} frame, we want
this frame fixed so that's what we did. We
made one frame out of the two and the difficult
and challenging part was with all the stuff
on these trucks and the size of these trucks
was that they had to be real close and
very accurate, so my partner and I
worked approximately two weeks on it and
we made this frame and I still think
if the truck was to go it would be going
today. And we were told we couldn't afford
to be short we had to be long so taking
everything into consideration when we
got through we were $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch long
the job took approximately two weeks.

1/2 chude
+ greets
part

6.

Me: Pretty good.

Me: Over the years what have you enjoyed the most about your job?

Mr. B: I think over the years the most I think I enjoyed about my job is I liked to make things I like to build things such as stairways and handrailings and whatever had to be made lockers and whatever was made. I think I enjoyed watching things grow. I'm, I believe I'm the type of person who would have said I like to work with my hands. I always liked building things... something new, something I would call a challenge, I just didn't like to do the same thing everyday, but you would have to.

✓
to pay?
check?
include
+ quote
emphasize
a builder
with "metal"

Me: ok

Me: What are the biggest responsibilities of your job?

Mr. B: I think the biggest responsibility of my job probably would be safety, working safely, and also if you were working with your partner that we both work safely and see that our job was done properly and on time if possible.

✓
include

Me: If it applies to you, describe the most dangerous situations that you have been in?

Mr. B: Well I think the most dangerous situation was probably in the working situations would be when I worked underground on weekends we had to repair the shafts. So, I would say that's probably the most dangerous situation that I worked in.

Me: Did anything ever happen when you were...
like...

Mr. B: As luck would have it nothing ever happened we never had any no accidents or nothing but working a shaft was always dangerous.

Me: Did you know any one who did?

Mr. B: ~~Not~~ Not off hand, no.

Me: Have you been involved in or witnessed any accidents? If so please describe them.

Mr. B: No, I haven't been involved in any serious accidents. or didn't see anything happen, all I heard was of the accidents in the mine and I couldn't really speak to much of it.

Me: Could you describe either the most unique or ~~the~~ perhaps humorous situations you have seen over the years?

Mr. B: That one I don't know... I really can't answer to much on that... I can't think of anything right now.

Me: Please describe your working conditions.

Mr. B: Well, after I left the underground mines I worked in the open pits I always worked in the pit department so I would say the conditions were cold, wet, and we worked working

In snowstorms and whatever it was so that's what the conditions were then so I think that's about all I can say about the conditions then.

Me: OK.

Mr. B: We worked in all kinds of weather.

Me: How have safety standards changed and what improvements ~~are~~ do you see are yet to be made.

Mr. B: Well I think safety standards have changed much do to modern technology and so on I have been retired now for 8 years now so I couldn't say to much on this... ... Safety did come up a lot in the last few years I did work so we were very happy with that.

Me: How have you seen the duties of your job change over the last few years?

Mr. B: I really don't know I can't much answer that one either I really can't say

Me: OK

Me: Please describe what your co-workers are like or were like. Do you remember any special stories that stand out about them?

Mr. B: Well, I can't really say any stories, I mean, I suppose it would be a lot but all my co-workers I would have to say were a real close knit of employees and I sure enjoyed working with them. And as we always said in the mines we always were like one big family. I think we were all in the same boat.

possible quote ✓

Me: OK

Me: During your career were you involved in any special projects or have you implemented any new programs? if so please describe them.

Mr. B: No I am afraid I didn't get involved in those special programs or projects. No I couldn't answer nothing on that one.

Me: Have you ever won any awards or have you been recognized in any way for your

Me: (cont.) job performance?

Mr. B: no, I never did win any programs so I can't really answer on that one either so. Well we did win some safety awards if you want so many hours without an accident we were given different awards and departments awards, but those were the only awards what were involved.

Me: ok

Me: At any time have you felt like changing jobs over your career? Why or why not.

Mr. B: No, I don't think I would of ever thought of changing jobs especially after I became a welder and had a trade I was earning good money and at the times we had real good benefits, good insurance benefits, and we had different good benefits such as retirement and so on so I was real happy with my job.

Me: OK

~~Mr. B~~

Me: Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Steelworkers Union?

Mr. B: Yeah I was a, belonged to the steelworkers Union for all the time I worked for the mining company.

Me: Have you ever experienced being on a strike? If so, how many times?

Mr. B: Oh yes, I've been on strikes possibly 4 or 5 times and I think actually the total time I was on strike probably involved over 1 year.

Mr: How does the strike actually begin?

Mr. B: Oh, I think the strike probably begins when the company and the Union can not agree on a contract and the bargaining breaks down and I think that's probably what a strike does. And ~~the~~ In fact I think the strike brings both the Union and the company back to the bargaining table.

Me: OK

Me: How many employees does the strike usually involve?

Mr. B: Well, I think the strike usually involves ^{just about always} all the hourly employees. Which is possibly about 80% of the work force.

Me: In your opinion, why is the Steelworkers Union so important to the workers?

Mr. B: Well, I think Union is important because it's a voice for the workers for the employees, I mean... and they do all your bargaining and taking care of all the complaints and agreements and whatever, what comes on the line.

Me: OK

Me: What do you think the future holds for the Ulden and the Empire.

Steel
Workers
Union

Mr. B: Well, right now I have been off for eight years, but from what I can gather I think the future, at least the immediate future, looks quite good.

Me: What does the future look like for the iron and steel industry in general?

Mr. B: Well, I would almost have to say the same I think we'll always have a demand for iron and steel in our country, so I think the industry looks pretty good at this time I would say

Me: Looking far into the future, how do you think history will remember the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company and its workers?

Mr. B: Well, I think as far as looking back into history I think C.C.I. was real good for its area and so-on so... as I said it was good for this area and it sure helped a lot of people in this area and I mean for work and at one time there was an awful lot of work with Cleveland Cliffs so Cleveland Cliffs was real good for this area.

Me: How has the role of women changed in the iron industry, and what direction do you think it will take in the future?

include - possible quote

Mr. B: Well at the time I retired there was only
a few women at that time so I can't say
to much but I don't think it is going
to hurt anything, if anything it would
probably only be better with women working
and so-on.

Me: What skills do the young people of today need to develop if they plan to work for C.C.I. someday?

Mr. B: ~~that is~~ Well I would say, most of
them probably should take, probably some
skill training, and get all the education, *nclude*
they can it would say

Me: In a related question, what advice would you give in general to the students of today?

Mr. B: Well almost the same as the last question go
to school study hard get a degree, and if not
a good degree get a skill trade about all
I can say on that is ^{good} school and study
hard.

Me: Please describe what you ~~like~~ ^{enjoy} doing in your spare time.

Mr. B: Well, right now, ~~that is~~ I've always worked
with my hands welding. right now I'm
doing wood-working, I do all kinds of wood-
working part, time, of course, I make from toys

Mr. B: (continued) to bowls with my lathe and furniture
and so-on and so thats what I enjoy doing now

Me: Could you tell in more depth what you do in wood-carving?

Mr. B: ~~I do~~ In wood-carving I don't do much in wood
I don't do any carving I just work with my ~~lathe~~
equipment you know I don't do any hand carving
~~or anything~~ at all I just love working with my
lathe making things and so on and so I think
its about as far as I could ^{probably} say.

Me: Whats the biggest, best, or greatest thing you ever made?

Mr. B: Well the best, biggest thing I ever made you would
call it an ^{armoire} armour I was a large oak chest
about 6 feet high and about 42 inches wide
and I put a lot of time and effort into that
one and I made it for my daughter so, But
I personally I like making small things toys
and so-on and bowls and so-on this is what
I like to do best shelves and ~~soon~~

Me: Yeah ok

Me: If you had to do it all over again, would
you make the same career choice? Why or why
not? if I had to do it again

Mr. B: Oh, I think I would do the same thing, almost, I
enjoyed working with my hands all these years

Mr. B: (continued) and I enjoyed doing what I did I
made a fair amount of money and good
benefits such as they were with the mining company
I worked with yes I would say I was happy
with what I did and I would probably do the
same thing all over again.

Me: Looking back over the years, what impressions
stand out the most in your mind concerning
your association with C.C.I.?

Mr. B: Well, I think I would have to say C.C.I. was
real good for this area and I would have to
say I'm not a bit sorry I worked with them
for all these years and the company and working
for the company and enjoyed my years of service
with the company. so

Me: OK

Me: Before we end the interview is there anything else
you would like to add? [that comes to mind that]

Mr. B: I would like to add one more thing to my hobbies
is I just love fishing and I love to go hunting
so I love bowhunting and I also love rifle hunting
but I did have a bad year I didn't get my
Buck

Me: Ohh... Do you have a camp?

Mr. B: Yes I have a camp we have it in Ewen, Michigan
In fact we have a very nice camp we have
a camp there and we also have a nice sauna
so we really enjoy the camp.

Me: Have you ever shot any big bucks?

Mr. B: Well, never shot any big bucks in that area
most of the bucks in that area have been a
little small maybe upto about a six or seven
pointer.

Me: Do you hunt anything else besides deer, ever?

Mr. B: Well, I've gone out west twice and I've hunted
mule deer and antelope and both times I luck ... have
my luck and we filled up both ~~we~~ ^I shot two mule
deer and ^I shot two antelope.

Me: O.K.

Me: Anything else you would like to add?

Mr. B: No, that's about all, retirement is great I've enjoyed
my retirement and I hope to continue on with my
retirement and enjoy Phoenix for the winter months
like I've started doing now.

Me: Thank you very much for the interview.

Mr. B: O.K., it was nice having you here and I enjoyed
it, thank you.

Steel workers

Union, Strikes

4 A. type of work
1. duties

2. safety

dangerous situations

6 B. welding of the frames

2 C. training

3 D. when & where he worked who he knew (relatives)

1 E. How he started working

F. Have you wanted to change

5 G. Why you like your job

H. Spare time (retirement)

working conditions

training

CO-Workers
New Programs

Opinions
Thoughts
about filden
Empire-
schooling
etc.