

Amy Johnson's
interview with Robert Johnson

ME: When and where were you born?

Mr. J: Born in Escanaba, Michigan ~~1924~~ 1924

ME: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. J: Ewald and Myrtle Johnson

ME: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. J: My father worked in the mines my mother was a home-maker she was a teacher before she was married my father went to Michigan Tech.

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

Mr. J: Carol, Elaine, Myrtle

ME: Are you currently married?

Mr. J: No, Widowed

ME: What are the names of your children

Mr. J: Charles, Robert and Barbara

ME: How long have you been working in the ^(iron) mining industry

Mr. J: From 1942 to 1980

ME: Why did you choose to work in the iron industry

Mr. J: they were the only jobs available ~~in~~ in 1942, once you got into them their security and the paydays ^{felt} were good so you stuck right to them.

felt

ME: Please name those relatives who have worked in the iron industry

Mr. J: My dad, my brother ^{and} ^{Dwayne} and most of my brother-in-laws. ^{Dwane}

ME: What are the names of the various mines or buildings you have worked in.

Mr. J: Ohmoss mine, the Morris Mine, the Mather B, and the Tilden.

ME: Over the years what kinds of duties have you performed for CCI.

Mr. J: Motor man, miner, timber man, and at the Tilden I was a clarifier operator in the end.

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

*where did the water come from
shipped the water where?*

Mr. J: I took all the mud and the muddy water that used to come out to me and with certain chemicals and other stuff I used to settle the mud in it and I shipped the water the clean water out.

*why?
was this a building?
Clarifier Building
Tilden
5 miles from mile*

ME: Did this job require any special training or a higher education

Mr. J: yes, how to use chemicals to read meters
and how many millimeters of certain chemicals
your supposed to put for millions of gallons.

ME: Please describe any special machinery or equip-
ment that you use on the job.

Mr. J: All meters and chemicals thats about it for
that job.

ME: What is the most challenging ^{or difficult} part of your job.

Mr. J: Trying to keep the cheapest way to get clean
water to meet the state standards before we
ship it back into the river we used to
get it dirty water used to come out cleaner
than when they got it at the mines.

ME: Where did you get the water from

Mr. J: From the T. Iden or from the Greenwood
Reservoir.

ME: Thinking back over the years what was
the most challenging or difficult duty you
had to perform.

Mr. J: When I come from underground I was
underground for 30 ^{around} years mining, and having
to work on surface all different kinds
of equipment personell different situations

Mr. J: and used to being underground all those years.

ME: Over the years what have you enjoyed the most about your job.

Mr. J: The security, and working with the fella's

ME: what are the biggest responsibilities about your job.

Mr. J: To make sure that there's clean water going into the river's otherwise the DNR would be on your back immediately
~~then~~ I would receive a penalty.

include

ME: If it applies to you describe the most dangerous situations you have ever been in.

Mr. J: One time at the Morris Mine I was doing what they call Scope mining that's a big hole in the ground and you put a bench around it what they call benches it's a place where you work and walk around the whole thing as you mine it and each one is 25ft apart each little sub one day I was up on ^{at the} Sixth or Seventh and I was up about 150ft. and I was working

include

Mr. J continued: out in the bench drilling holes so I
could blast there. and I had all the
holes drilled I put my equipment
away and I was going back to ~~the~~
dog drift to get powder and dynamite
I fixed my charges ~~with~~ and went
back out to where I was working
and it was gone I would of stayed
there another 15 minutes I would
have fell 150 ft.

ME: Was there anything below & what would've
happened

Mr. J: dirt, you would have got squashed
^{cause} dirt would have fell on top of you

ME: Have you ever been involved in or have
you witnessed any accidents. If so
please describe them.

Mr. J: no, nothing serious

ME: Could describe ^{the} most unique or perhaps
humorous situations you have ever ~~been~~ been
~~seen~~ seen over the years

~~Mr. J~~

me: (repeated question)

Mr. J: yes, one time underground at lunch
time there was one man we'll call him
Jack he was the hungriest fella there
was he ate anything that somebody
give him regardless of what it was
so one day we fooled him we took
a sandwich apart and took the
bologna out and there was some red
gasket material that looked just like
bologna. and we put that in between
the bread with the mustard and
that and give it to him and he
tried for about 10 minutes trying
to tear a chunk off that bologna
till he finally realized what was
happening (laugh)

include

ME: Please describe your working
conditions.

Mr. J: dangerous you had to be you had to have
all your faculties at all times faculties (?) *get this*
— you had to know each situation
that you were in.

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

Mr. J: They've changed 100% around especially with
the government into it now and the unions
include are so strict to that the mines themselves
for money wise for insurances and that have
programs now where you got to go to
School. Everybody works in industry.

ME: How have you seen the duties of your
job change over the years.

Mr. J: I think its [less physical and ^{more} machinery]
good quite

ME: Please describe what your co-workers are like, do
you remember any special stories that stand out
about them.

Mr. J: They were all good fellows no nothing
humorous.

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

Mr. J: Yes, I used to be in a mine rescue that's
where you had to ~~bring~~ wear an
apparatus underground in case of fire
and you breathe self contained oxygen
you had to enter smoke filled and fire
filled places to rescue the men and
try to put the fire out

include

ME: How did the fire's start

Mr. J: Spontaneous Combustion, from old rotting
timbers sometimes electrical fires

ME: Have you ever won any awards or have you been recognized in your job performance.

Mr. J: No

ME: At any time have you ~~ever~~ felt like changing jobs or your career why or why not

Mr. J: Yes, at one time I was going to go to a veterinarian school after I had been in the mines for about 2 yrs. But then things didn't look to good around so I ~~stayed in the mines~~ in the mines so I just stayed.

ME: What do you think the future holds for the Tilden and Empire Mines.

Mr. J: Very good because they're becoming more mechanized its costing more to buy the equipment but they can double their production.

include

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

Mr. J: very good

Mr. J. ~~because they're becoming more mechanized~~
~~it's costing more to buy the equipment~~
~~but they can double their production~~

ME: ~~What does the~~

ME: What do you feel must be done in the future for
C.C.I. to remain competitive.

Mr. J: Keep costs down better equipment more
productive workers

ME: What do you think has been the key to success
of C.C.I. where other companies have failed.

Mr. J: they company and the men the relationship both
have tried over the years to make everything
better more productive to each side

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

Mr. J: very good CCI has been very good for

include -
possible
quit

Marquette County the Upper Peninsula the whole
industry as a whole

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

Mr. J: When I started there was never any women working in the mines the women have joined with the men and they have taken the same jobs ~~jobs~~ dangers and they have just as many skills as the men now as in engineering and geology before they never

ME: What skills do the young people of today need to develop if they plan to work for CCI someday.

Mr. J: education they got to stay in school

ME: In a related question what advice could you give in general to the students of today.

Mr. J: stay in school and learn ^{harder} study ^{harder} than you think you can because this world today is so competitive and usually a high school education ain't quite enough.

ME: Are you now or have you ever been a member of the steelworkers union.

Mr. J% yes

ME% Have you ever experienced being on strike

Mr. J% yes

ME% How many times

Mr. J% dozens

ME% How does a strike actually begin

Mr. J% When each side couldn't come together on a wages working conditions pensions etc.

ME% How many employees does a strike usually involve.

Mr. J% everyone except salary

ME% What is the purpose of a picket line and describe what happens there

Mr. J% to try and stop non union workers from going to work not the salary people but the laborers themselves to show that they that they want partnership from everybody

ME% Do you know of any interesting stories about an incident on a picket line

Mr. J% no

ME% In general what is the most interesting or unique story that you can remember from any time the workers were on strike

Mr. J% none

ME% what takes place at a union meeting or union rally.

Mr. J% your allowed to ^{describe} ~~discuss~~ your differences with the union the company & what you think should be done and shouldn't be done your wages & working conditions & that's it.

ME% In your opinion why is the steel workers union so important to the workers.

Mr. J% for security and for safety and wages & for stuff like that. include

ME% Please describe what you enjoy doing in your spare time.

Mr. J: fishing hunting.

ME: If you had to do it all over again would you make the same career choice why or why not.

Mr. J: yes I believe I would its been good years and back

ME: Looking back over the years what impressions stand out most in your mind concerning your association with CCI

Mr. J: I think they were a good company
I think they looked out for the
welfare of their men

ME: Before we end the interview is there anything else that comes to mind that you would like to add

Mr. J: nothing

Mr. J: (Not on tape)
Machines jack hammers bucketloaders
(Ingersoll rand)

Women have as much
ability as men.

over

Maryoie, Helen, Susie, Joanne

Amy - Billy

go back and ask for more details about the water etc. - Where did it come from - how was it pumped out.

Carp R, Lake Michigan


back to dikes


leftover water


cleared -> Chemicals
↓
Alum
Hydrochloric acid
polymer


You need an explanation for people who don't know what the mines are like.


Big drilling machine drills holes in ground blasted shovel into mines processed separated ore run in flotation plant


Introduction (family etc.) = 


First started in mines = 


Duties = 


Training special machinery = 


Challenging, difficult problems responsibilities etc. = 



Dangerous = 

Humorous = 

Conditions = 
Safety

Changed = 
Special projects

About CCI = 

Steelworkers union =  women & young people = 

Conclusion = 