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ERIC WIKMAN'S  
INTERVIEW WITH JERRY OJA

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ME - I AM ERIC WIKMAN AND I AM INTERVIEWING  
JERRY OJA

ME - WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

JERRY - I WAS BORN SEPT. 9 1937. I BELIEVE I WAS  
BORN IN THE ISHREMING HOSPITAL. I WAS RAISED IN  
THE HUMBOLT AREA. AND I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL AT THE  
CHAMPION HIGH SCHOOL.

ME - WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF YOUR PARENTS?

JERRY - MY FATHER'S NAME IS WILLIAM EDWARD OJA AND MY  
MOTHER'S NAME WAS ENGA ELIZIBETH OJA.

ME - WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS DO FOR A LIVING?

JERRY - MY FATHER WAS AN ELECTRICIAN AT THE MINES HE  
WORKED FOR SEVERAL DIFFERT MINES INCLUDING CLELAND  
CLIFFS IN HIS LATER YEARS. MY MOTHER WAS A HOME-  
MAKER.

ME - WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

JERRY - I HAD TWO BROTHERS, AND THREE SISTERS MY BROTHERS  
NAMES WERE RICHARD OJA AND KEN OJA, MY SISTERS NAMES  
ARE JUDY CATALA SARA WILLIAMS AND VIRGINIA PRUCCI

ME: ARE YOU CURRENTLY MARRIED?

JERRY: I AM MARRIED TO MARGARET SUSAN OJA.

ME: WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF YOUR CHILDREN?

JERRY: I HAVE THREE SONS AND THREE DAUGHTERS THE NAMES FROM THE OLDEST TO THE YOUNGEST ARE DANIAK WILLIAM, BETH MARLENE SIMONSON, SUSAN CAROL JOHNSON, ERIC GERALD, AMY ALINE MAC LENEY, AND PAUL RICHARD OJA.

ME: HOW LONG DID YOU WORK IN THE IRON INDUSTRY?

JERRY: I WORKED FOR CLEVELAND CLIFFS IRON COMPANY FOR ALMOST 25 YEARS,

ME: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN THE IRON INDUSTRY?

JERRY: I WANTED TO LIVE IN MARQUETTE COUNTY AND THATS WHY I CHOSE TO COME BACK TO WORK FOR CLEVELAND CLIFFS *include*

ME: PLEASE NAME THOSE RELATIVES WHO WORKED IN THE IRON INDUSTRY?

JERRY: I ~~DO~~ HAVE <sup>A FATHER WILLIAM</sup> ~~A FATHER~~ WHO WORKED FOR CLEVELAND CLIFFS AND NORTH RANGE MINING COMPANY AND I HAVE A BROTHER KEN WHO PRESENTLY WORKS FOR CLEVELAND CLIFFS AND THE RESEARCH LAB.

ME: WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF THE VARIOUS MINES OR BUILDINGS YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

JERRY: I HAVE WORKED IN THE REPUBLIC MINE AT THE START OF MY CAREER FOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS. I WORKED AT THE EMPRE MINE FOR OVER 10 YEARS AND I CONCLUDED MY CAREER AT THE CENTRAL SHOPS

*include*

ME: OVER THE YEARS WHAT KINDS OF DUTIES DID YOU PERFORM FOR CCI?

JERRY: I STARTED OFF AS AN ENGINEER AT THE REPUBLIC AND I SUBSEQUENTLY HELD POSITIONS AS <sup>matinence</sup> ~~maintinence~~ <sup>superintendent</sup> ~~superintendant~~ plant superintendant, mine superintendant at Empire and I finished my career as a central shops superintendant.

ME: In as much ~~as~~ detail as possible what were the main duties of your job?

Jerry: well as the mine superintendant for instance of the empire mine I was second in command and I was responsible for the ~~entire~~ <sup>entire</sup> operation of the mine. <sup>heyday?</sup> ~~at~~ the time of the <sup>hillday?</sup> ~~of~~ the Empire we had

emphasize possible quote

(mine names are capitalized)

<sup>1200</sup> 12 hundred employees and I could summarize it best by saying our goal was to produce to <sup>competitive</sup> ~~prescribe~~ pellet <sup>tonnage</sup> ~~tonnage~~ at a competitive price per ton. This responsibility included all phases of the mine including operations, maintenance safety, <sup>grievances</sup> ~~grievences~~ and so forth.

ME: did your job require any special ~~training~~ or higher education?

Jerry: I had a B.S. degree in mechanic or engineering from Michigan Technological university graduated in 1955.

ME: Did you use any special <sup>machinery</sup> machinery or equipment on the job?

Jerry: None that I can think of.

me: what was the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

Jerry: I guess at times alot of it was difficult working many long hours being on call at night and difficulty ~~of~~ when we had severe accidents, fatalities, and I guess another part that I can recall that was difficult was the handling of grievances and in the later years <sup>negotiating</sup> ~~negotiating~~ contracts with the unions especially when they were concessory type contracts

include + quote

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

Jerry: I guess the duties that I <sup>would say</sup> ~~were~~ the most difficult were those ~~that~~ ~~we~~ resulted ~~in~~ because an engineer was seriously injured or killed on the job these were very emotional and they bothered me for many days afterward.

possible quote

me: over the years what did you enjoy the most about your job?

Jerry: well when we had high production tonnages and when these were met I guess that gave me the most satisfaction and ~~it~~ because it resulted by good effort by many many people.

include

Jerry continued: AND I think the memories you would recall working for ~~the~~ the excellent work ~~for~~ course I think that's one of the things that was proven.

ME: WHAT were the biggest responsibilities of your job?

Jerry: I think what stands out mostly is to insure the safety of all employees

ME: WERE you ever in any dangerous situations?

Jerry: None that I can think of.

ME: ~~have you~~ have you been involved in or have you witnessed any accidents?

Jerry: well I can particularly remember two fatal accidents that happened that I was close to one was an electrician who was killed at the Republic mine when a motor starter exploded and caused severe damage. He was taken to the hospital and later died. The second thing that I remember was a production truck driver who backed over the rock dump and was killed instantly.

include

ME: could you describe either the most unique or perhaps humorous situations you have been in?

Jerry: I can't think of any off hand.

me: could you describe what your working conditions were like?

Jerry: well it would have basically ~~been~~ been the same for all employees. There would be some dust in some of the areas there would be lots of noise in the plant. There would be extreme heat and humidity in the pellet plant very cold in the ~~trick~~ <sup>trick</sup> in the winter. and I guess you could say all types of temperature extremes <sup>included</sup>

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

Jerry: well I think the safety as I see it ~~has~~ has continually improved both by increasing the training of employees and ~~buying~~ <sup>buying</sup> better engineered safety equipment. and I think this will be a continuous change in improvement on both of these in the further future. <sup>include</sup>

me: How did the duties of your job change over the years?

Jerry: when ~~I~~ first started my career I go less to make the most tonnage no matter what it took and we could still sell ~~it~~ the pellets but in the latter years the industry became a world wide competitive industry and we were required to produce the same tons with less manpower and also when we produced these <sup>include & quote</sup> tons at a continually improved quality.

Jerry continued: and ~~we had to do this in order to sell the pellets~~ ~~we had to do this~~ ~~we had to do this~~ pellets but this but an increase stretch on the entire work course on the super region.

me: during your career were you involved in any special projects or did you start any new programs?

Jerry: Yes, we were continually responsible ~~for~~ for new projects and one of the things that stands out the most was the construction and startup of the expansions <sup>get exact names + places</sup> at the mine. These involved spending of millions and millions of dollars and caused an increase workload for all employees during this construction period.

me: please describe what your co-workers were like?

Jerry: well, in general I would say that the work course at the mines are well trained and I would consider them to be as good or better than any in any other industry in the united states. I think this would generally be true of the work course in the upper peninsula we have good people here and they know how to work and do a good job.

me: do you remember any special stories that stand out about them?

Jerry: not that I ~~remember~~

me: did you ever win any awards or were you recognized in any way for your job performance?

Jerry: other than the ~~regular~~ regular promotions, no.

me: At any time did you feel like changing jobs or your career?

Jerry: No, I wanted to remain in Marquette County area and I felt that I had a <sup>very</sup> good job and I was ~~very~~ satisfied with my career and so I can't think of any time that I wanted to leave or change companies.

me: what do you think the future holds for the Tilden and Empire? include

Jerry: I think as long as the ore bodies hold out the Cleveland cliffs mines will remain competitive. I think the fine ways to stay competitive due to a good management team and a good work force. also I believe they will and they have continued to spend money on research and development so that they can keep up with the latest technologies and plans.

include + good

me: what does the future look like for the iron and steel industry in general?



Jerry: I think there will always be an iron and steel industry I think they will still survive however they will survive with less manpower and than they have in the past *quote*

me: what do you feel must be done in the future for C.C.I. to remain competitive?

Jerry: I think they have to continue to improve by working smarter to have to increase the tons per man by improving work procedures buying the latest and best equipment and continue to work together as a team.

me: what do you think has been the key to success of C.C.I. where other companies have failed? *include*

Jerry: I think C.C.I. is willing to spend research money to improve the product they are willing to reduce the manpowers to increase the tons per man I think they have tremendously improved the quality of the product and the management of ~~have~~ been working together better. *include possible quote*

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

Jerry: I don't know how they will be remembered but I think they will definitely be remembered because Cleveland Cliffs has worked for many many years

Jerry continued: and that's how many 130, 140 ~~times~~  
what car and its effected the lives  
of so many people and has had such  
an impact on the community that they  
will be remembered ] possible quote

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

Jerry: I think the role of women will be the same in Cleveland Cliffs as the role in any other industry in otherwards there will be more and more excepted and will be doing all of any jobs eventually

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

Jerry: I think they should continue to do as much Education as possible some that don't want additional college need to pursue a technical choice such as electronics or welding I think computers experience will be necessary for many jobs but mainly they need to get a job anywhere and get some hands on experience and on this job do a good job as possible to establish an excellent work force.

include

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

Jerry: study hard in high school and college  
sacrifice a little now and then it will  
pay you back 10 fold in the future.

me: please describe what you like doing in your spare time?

Jerry: we like going to visit our children and grandchildren we ~~we~~ have three of them spread out in the united states we enjoy going to phoenix for ~~a~~ three months in the winter and I enjoy doing woodworking. I like to hike especially when we are in phoenix and I enjoy fishing.

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

Jerry: I think that I haven't any place in the united states that I'd rather call home so I would like I would choose to work in this area and I don't think that I could find a better ~~career~~ career than I had with Cleveland clothes. So the answer has to be yes.

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

Jerry: I guess just simply ~~would~~ ~~be~~ ~~me~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~other~~ ~~people~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~ ~~work~~ ~~with~~. ~~me~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~other~~ ~~people~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~ ~~work~~ ~~with~~.

Include

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

Jerry: Well, I just might mention that I worked the first six years of my career at the Boeing Company of Seattle this involved working all across the ~~United States~~ Northern Interior of the U.S. Installing v missiles and minuteman missiles this was a very good job with very good pay that when I left to come back to home in the U.S. I would just give some advice to the young people of today they may have to go away for awhile like I had to due to the limits ~~of~~ job market in the U.S. That wherever they go the need to do a good a job as possible ~~at~~ in whatever job they're on and sooner or later they will end up doing what ever they like in the area they want to be.

include & quote

2/19/2019

2/19/2019

I wanted to live in Marquette county and that's why I chose to come back and work for Cleveland Cliffs. (2)

I have worked in the Republic mine at the start of my career for about 5 years, I worked at the Empire mine for over 10 years and I concluded my career at Central Shops. (2)

1.) Various mines worked in — yellow

2.) duties — blue

3.) Working conditions — Green  
Sunny

4.) Safety — red

5.) Future — Brown

6.) education — Purple  
Training

7.) Success — orange

8.) Dangerous situations — Green + red  
Fat