

Louie Ostola's interview
with William Pascoe

Me: When and where were you born?

W.P.: I was born in Ishpeming, January 12, 1912.

Me: What were the names of your parents?

W.P.: Arthur James Pascoe and ^{Beatrice} Beatrice Pascoe

Me: What did your parents do for a living?

W.P.: Ah, My father worked for CI until he got sick and had to retire kinda young and my mother worked part time at the ^{check} _____ whenever younger

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

W.P.: I have two sisters and one brother left. One sister has passed away and my brother is Richard Pascoe on Jasper Street and I have a sister Hazel who lives in Kalamazoo, and another sister that lives up in Bluff Street apartments, Violet.

Me: Are you currently married?

W.P.: Yes, I'm married, as of now I've been married 60 years

Me: What are the names of your children?

W.P.: The oldest, well you'd ~~what~~ want the married name of course, V The oldest daughter is Sue Helen Tesson, the next daughter is Mary Lou ^{DeLorenzi} DeLorenzi, the next one is Sandra Jean Hatch, the next one is Roberta Lee Sjöholm, You probably know the name.

Me: How long were you working in the Iron Industry?

W.P.: I worked about 40 years, at least 40, ah why did I choose to work in the Iron Industry?

Me: Ah, ya

W.P.: Well, there was nothing else around here at the time.

Me: Well did you have any other relatives worked in the mine, besides your father?

W.P.: I think all of my uncles on both sides of the family worked for C.I. at some time or other.

Me: What mines did you work at.

W.P.: And, ah let's see I worked at the Tilden pit in 1934, 35, and 36 and at the Loyd mine from '36 to the end of '55 and I transferred to the Mather B mine and I worked there till 1974

Me: Then you retired when?

W.P.: I retired the first day of 1974, ~~and~~ January 1, 1974

Me: Oh, Well what kinds of jobs did you have at C.I.

W.P.: Just about every job possible I think. Ah, motorman, brakeman, backhoe operator, miner, hoist operator, tigger overhaul, tigger repair, grease man, ah, that's about all I can think of right now. Ah, that and then at the Tilden pit I started at we were, how can I say it. We were doing ^{hydraulic} mining out there.

include - this was very early!

include

W.P.: We were washing surface dirt off of the east pit so they could develop the east pit as it was called at that time.

Me: What exactly is a motorman?

W.P.: Well they used to have electric haulage motors underground and they would ~~run~~ run this motor and it would go inside and fill your cars and take them out the shaft dump them in the skip

Me: Did these jobs require any special training?

W.P.: Well I think the only one that takes any special training would be to be a miner. Now I worked 8 weeks with 1 man and I didn't know anything more when I got through than when I started with him. And I worked one day with another man, his partner was home, and I learned more in one day with that man than I learned in eight weeks with that other one. That's the truth, now I could give you the name of that ~~man~~ man but he wrote for the Red Dust one year, do you remember the name Ralph Mahi?

Me: Ah, no I've never of him

W.P.: Well he was the one I was sent to work with him and I learned more in one day than I learned in eight weeks with this other man. I won't give you his name

Includes - shows the "risk" of on the job training

Me: Could describe the machinery and equipment that you worked with?

W.P.: Well the hoisting engineer as it was ~~called~~ called you would hoist the, run hoist that would pull the skips to surface or the men whichever case or whichever one you were working with. There were two of them at the ^{Lloyd} mine, and you would lower them or bring them up to the surface. or you could go onto the other one ~~and~~ and you would bring the skips up and dump them and go back down for another trip. Well, in fact there were two of them ~~and~~ when one was up dumping the other one was being loaded.

include - it's a good explanation

Me: What was the most challenging part of the job?

W.P.: Most Challenging. Gee, I don't really know what was the most challenging. I think most challenging would be mining because there is a lot of different things to learn in mining. Um, to learn how to drill to make ~~the~~ blast, to make the dirt, to break with your dynamite, we used dynamite at that time. And to make the cut we would have to drill a certain way to break that ore so it would fall down loose.

include - the "old" way

Me: What have you enjoyed the most about working at the mine?

W.P.: Well I enjoyed working with a lot of the men that I worked with, but ah, I think I enjoyed that backhoe ^{include} job very much at the Mather B.

W.P.: I did enjoy the hoisting operator at the Lord mine, and at the Tilden Pit I guess I enjoyed everything out there. But his way was early it isn't like it is now. (Was it open pit mining at that time?)
When did it close? Find out more info here.

Me: So then the job wasn't too stressful?

W.P.: No, no I don't think so. Now would you like a dangerous situation?

Me: Where you in any?

W.P.: I was with my partner and I were within two minutes of being buried alive. Ah, I had a different partner at this time and there was a, the fourth level was practically played out but there was a small body they wanted to take out and they sent my partner and I were both you might say "greenhorns" they, and it was between two seams of rock. I was a small ore body and one night, night shift we were drilling, in the breast as they call it to make this cut. The boss come and he turned off the air and he said, Get outta here immediately, this place is coming in. Well he shut the air off of the drilling machine. We wouldn't have heard it otherwise. And this dirt was dribbling as they call it, the ore was breaking loose of the rock and as it got higher there was a big body when that slid everything come in flat.

Condense & include -
show the danger of mines underground

W.P.: We just got back by the raise when everything flattened out. So it was within two minutes we would've lost our lives I don't think they would've ever found us.

Me: Where was this, that this happened?

W.P.: At the Loyd Mine.

Me: Have you really witnessed any accidents?

W.P.: I actually haven't witnessed any accidents. Though, ah, although one boy was killed at the Loyd. They were working over a raise they had the raised full of dirt so they could stand on it and the motor crew wasn't supposed to touch that but they did they went and emptied this tank of dirt out in the cars to take the shaft and they weren't supposed to do it but the dirt went down and they went down with it. They got buried.

Me: Were there any humorous things that happened?

W.P.: Well it's kind of hard to explain what would be the most humorous. (A pause) Working conditions were I would say fairly well. And safety standards have changed quite a bit from the time I started there.

Me: Were you ever part of a steelworkers union?

W.P.: ~~Yes~~ You bet your life. One of the first. In fact when I joined the union we had to pay our dues in secret. We weren't recognized yet by the company and we had to pay our dues in secret. include + quote

W.P.: We had to go to Nequame on Cherry Street to pay our dues
to the fella who was organizing it at that time.

Me: Oh, so you there from the beginning.

W.P.: I was there from the beginning and I would say it's something
that the working people need. There's some things that I don't
believe in but without the union things wouldn't be the best.
include

Me: Were you ~~ever~~ on strike?

W.P.: Yes, I was on strike several times the first time was in 1946
I think 1946 was the first strike we ever had with the company
and that lasted at least, I'd say, three months. *include*

Me: Were there any really long ones that you can remember.

W.P.: Well, that was one of the longest ones, I think there was one
longer later on. But this ~~was~~ was one of the longest ones
the first ones in 1946.

Me: How do the strikes begin?

W.P.: How do strikes begin? Well if the company don't want
to agree with what the union was looking for better conditions
then you...

Me: You just walk off to job.

W.P.: You have to walk off the job.

Me: How many people does the strike usually involve? everybody
not on salary.

W.P.: Just about everybody not on salary. Except maybe what they
used to call, scabs used to go back to work, but they kind of,
they were not considered...

Me: In the union.

W.P.: ... very nice, you know. They were, no I don't think they belonged to
the union. But they would call them scabs at that time I
think they still do.

Me: Ya, I've heard the term before. What is the purpose of a picket line.

W.P.: Well just to show the people that you're out on strike.

Me: How have the duties of your jobs changed through years?

W.P.: Well of course the duties of your job depend on what job you're on.
Ah, I don't know just how it would change. I think they were
more or less the same all the way through except for the
job you're on, different ^{jobs} require different training, different
responsibilities,

Me: Do you remember any co-workers ~~that~~ that you had that
really stand out in your mind?

W.P.: Yes, Ralph Maki, Elmer Delangelo was my partner that I was
describing that we almost lost our lives, um, there was so
many people that I worked with it was nice knowing every
one of them I think

Me: During your career were you ever involved in any special projects or put in any new programs?

W.P.: No that I know of.

Me: Have you ever won any awards?

W.P.: No, No I never did.

Me: At any time in your career have you ever felt like just quitting?

W.P.: Well yes I did one ^{time} and I decided to work on the railroad so I got a job on the old Duluth - ^{South shore?} Outshore - Atlantic at that time but, ah, you could be on the job, see I was only temporary, and you could be on a job on the railroad if somebody that's older than you want to bump you for just one trip they can knock off of that and then you gotta go on a different job or else back home again. So, I didn't stay with them because of that because you can be bumped off, which is a good thing I suppose but, and some people I worked with on the railroad they wouldn't tell you one thing, the old timers, you were practically working blind all the time, ya know they wouldn't tell you one thing, like one time we were meeting another train and brakeman said to me, "ask em if they got any short cars" well I didn't know what a short car was he wouldn't tell me he said "just ask if they got any short cars." Well I wanted to know what a short car was. A short car is an empty that they're bringing along that you're supposed to pick up and take with you. But he wouldn't tell me that.

include to contrast with iron ore mining

W.P.: So ah and another we were switching at a pulp loading station on this railroad, of course, and I was the brakeman and the conductor said, "pull the pin, pull the pin". You know that means?

Me: No

W.P.: Well you left that up to break the couplers apart, I was running down hill, the cars ran away, then he raises heck with me because I pulled pin too soon. Well he told me to do it so what was I to do. The cars ran away we had to go down to pick them up way down this long grade. He was madder than old hick about it. Well I pulled the pin.

Me: Ya I suppose you did what he told you.

W.P.: I did what he told me and I told him a few things that I won't repeat here. And another brakeman told me oh boy you're going to get ~~ok~~ oh what did they call it oh call it on the carpet anyway. I said I don't care. He told me to do it so I did what he told me, so that's one of the reasons I quit the railroad. And on top of that if I had stayed too long on too many jobs I would've lost my rights with C.I. And I would've had to start all over again.

me: So it sounds like the mine was a lot better place to work at than the railroad?

W.P.: It was a pretty good place to work well the railroad was pretty good to if you got enough time in ya know to ah have your rights. You gotta start young.

Me: What do you think the future holds for the Tilden and Empire?

W.P.: Well that's pretty hard to say of course it depends on how long the ore bodies hold out. Otherwise if they have any more, I think they have more ore bodies in sight so I think the future looks very good for C.I.

Me: What do you think the future looks like for C.I. as a whole?

W.P.: I think it looks very good myself although right now they're kind of looking for a decrease in taxes and I don't know if they're going to get it or not but they're fighting for it right now to have these taxes decreased.

me: What do you feel must be done in the future for C.I. to remain competitive? ~~I don't know what they could do different, ah they seem to be competitive all right.~~

W.P.: I don't know what they could do different, ah they seem to be competitive all right.

Me: ~~Looking into the future~~, What do you think has been the keys to success for C.I.?

W.P.: Well, it's been a very good company to work for and it's been here as long as I can remember and I'm almost 82. So it must be a good company to work for.

Me: Looking into the future, how do you think the people will remember anyone who worked at the mines?

W.P.: Well see at ah, in my time there were all underground except the Alder which is pretty early to that's ~~that~~ before 1934, I started out there at 1934 but they had already been going but before that everything was underground and it got to be so expensive to get that ore to surface that they want to do everything with open pits. Otherwise I imagine there's a lot of ore bodies around if they wanted to go like they used to in the underground mining. But I don't think they want to go into that if they don't have to.

Me: How has the role of women changed over the years, in the mine?

W.P.: When I first started working there there were no such thing as a women working in the mines, in the office of course you know not in the labor pool. But since these pits opened up the women are into working in the open pits. But none of them ever worked underground.

Me: What skills do you think the young people need to develop if they want to work at CCI?

W.P.: I would advise them to get all of the education they can and take up something special ~~and take up~~ such as engineering or electronics.

Me: That means 4 years of college or whatever. And what advice would you give to the young people? Just go through school and...

W.P.: Yes I would I would say go through school and get as much education as you can and take up some special categories.

Me: Could you describe what you enjoy doing in your spare time?

W.P.: Well I used to love to hunt and fish ah right ~~now~~ my legs aren't good enough to do much fishing so I don't do any of that any more, but I love trout fishing, especially in the streams, brook trout fishing.

Me: Where did you go?

W.P.: Fishing? Oh, every place imaginable, we fished well past Minising, and up past Republic and Crystal Falls and different areas.

Me: Remember any good fishing stories?

W.P.: You bet your life, I remember good fishing, the best I ever remember is at Dishnow Creek, ah in 1936 a friend of mine and myself went there, we fished there for 3 years, and we only met one person fishing, that had been an old timer fishing there before.

W.P.: And we never failed to get our limit, which was 15 trout at the time,

then in 1938 they put a road up there for logging, there was an old road we used to walk in. But they opened up this old ^{road} again for logging and from then on you couldn't park your car in there, and then it was fished out in no time, I went there a couple years after that and I got one chub, this is do-tenth, but before that 15 trout every time, and nice ones, at there was also a place down Minnising like that, in fact the stream if you hit it just right 15 trout would be so heavy the straps on your cradle would be so heavy that they would be cutting into your shoulder you would have to pick it up under your arm some time to carry, you don't see them things anymore.

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

W.P.: Well if I could have an education I don't think I would but I would go into something else, but otherwise if you don't have an education that's about the best you have around here, with the ore producing business.

Me: Looking back over the years what impressions stand out most in your mind concerning your association with CCI? were they always pretty good to you.

W.P. Oke yes they were always pretty good, in fact they were one of the best, when we were ~~we~~ wanted something done we just went to the blacksmith shop or to machine shops and asked them to do it and they could do it for us but later on of course they had to cut that stuff out. But when I was younger if I wanted had little welding done or a little blacksmithing you would just go over here to the blacksmith shop and ask them to do it and they do it. But you don't find that anymore, well they can't afford to do it I suppose and on top of that you'd be, there is a chance that you could be hurt and the other person, and they don't want anyone to be around where you could be injured.

Me: Well do you have anything else to add before we end the interview?


W.P.: Not that I can think of right now.


Me: Well, thanks.


W.P.: Ya glad to meet you

Me: Nice to meet you too.

I've never read an interview with someone who worked at the "old" Tilden. Please get some more information / description from him. We may never have another chance!

Working at the old mines. 


jobs and job duties. 


machinery and equipment. 


~~old days and mining~~


~~changes~~

enjoyable times. 

union. 

railroad. 

future. 

women. 

purple

yellow

~~green~~

orange

dk. blue

brown

lt. blue

orange

black

