

Peter Hebein
Interview with Mike Pietro

me: I was sitting in Mr. Pietro's kitchen.

me: When and where were you born?

~~Mr. P.~~ Mr. P.: I was born in 1909 in National Mine.

me: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. P.: John Pietro and Anne Sooras.

me: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. P.: My dad was a miner and my mom was a housewife.

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

Mr. P.: John, Ed, Henry, Paul, Lawrence, Ann, Mary

me: What are the names of your children?

Mr. P.: Mike Jr., Roger, Judy, Julie

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

Mr. P.: about 36 years.

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

Mr. P.: Because there was nothing else around here, it was all mining.

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

Mr. P.: Dad, every brother

me: What are the names of the various mines or buildings you have worked in?

Mr. P. Section 16 in 1926, I was 17 years old, Marquette County, for 2 years.

@ CI 1937, Atrons Mining Company, Moss mine, Cambria Jackson, Mathon B,

possible
quotes

me: Over the years what kinds of duties have you performed for CEI?

Mr. P: Driving drills, drop drills, include

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

Mr. P: You had to know what you were doing, anyone couldn't go and be a miner, you had to know how to handle powder, drill the holes in the rock

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

Mr. P: To be a miner

me: Over the year what have you enjoyed the most about your job?

Mr. P: Well I'll tell you, when I first started in the mine, they the first day you'd go there they would give you a shovel put on the main level and scoop out all the mud. include

me: Describe the most dangerous situations you have been in?

Mr. P: Let's see all dangerous, one time I was bringing a raise up and I went up so high, I went up about forty fifty feet and I blasted, I hit some I raised from the mine in Neguame, you couldn't see anything with your lights and these were electric lights, another time I went up a raise and a chunk about the size of that refrigerator went right by me and knocked the car off the track, I fell one time at track where a hopper usually comes but my partner came and got me off the track, I also one time got ~~and~~ whole bunch of my ribs broken when a rope got caught under my armpit and sent me flying. (not mentioned on the tape because he told me this after I ended interview along with some other stuff like how much he got paid ~~the~~ the one about the hopper back in the tape below)

include

me: Have you witnessed any accidents?

Mr. P: A few accidents a ~~some~~ got killed, I was on the moto one time taking dirt out of the shoot, it was water and mud coming in and there was a trolley with 2,300 volts coming by and nothing there you wire that ~~if~~ I would kill you right there

include

③ so I hollered up to the miner. I said well were through now
you can come ~~they~~ were fixing a raise you know on top
and they would throw they're ribbon and all that down
and the raise you know they were sciss-cross and they
had to be bar men up there to get out of the scapp, so
this guy was working with his dad young bella and this
young lad come down while we went up out the shaft to
dump that dirt, and when we come back somebody was
in there and said you killed a guy and I said never killed no guy.
I never saw anyone in when we left I said we spotted deer
under the shoot for this guy to come down to get the ribbon
and wood out of the shoot and when he come down he was
soaking wet and he touched that trolley wire and he get
electricuted right there nobody run over him or anything
so his dad come down he was pulling the hair out of his head
he was so you know he felt so bad sending his lad down
there he could have went down there (laughing) and that one
of the experiences I seen lots of the experiences I seen down there.

me: Please describe your working conditions.

M.P. Well you almost had to make your own
working conditions. If you were careless
with your working conditions putting up
your sets of timber and covering the back
and, and you had to uh... use your
own judgement on that kind of work you
know you couldn't tel anybody you
had to figure out oh that's dangerous.

(4) you can't do ———. There were a lot of times
we were putting up a set of timbers like that.
• We put that set of timbers of four times
we stand back you know and then we
would go back there would be something
you couldn't see nothing up there
with your light and then all of a sudden
a bag maybe two, three cars of dirt
would come and knock that set over
and we would have to go in there and
put it up there again. I've been working
under that conditions, so that was dangerous
too you know

include

~~me:~~
me: Now have you seen the duties of your job
change over the years?

Mr. P: Oh, lots of changes since we worked
for the O liver we do not now a be careful
and you had to you had different, you had
different rules to go by

you had to listen to the boss, what ever they
tell you had to, that's what you had to do.

me: During your career were you involved in
any special projects?

Mr. P. Yeah I was in putting this set of
timbers up as thirty-two pieces as one
special one timber, you know one set
and that, see we took our cor. see you
have a contract and you were the
miner and you always had a helper and
we had to, and our contract had to go over to
the moss mine and show them how to do
this so that was that.

include

me: Have you ever won any awards or have
you been recognized in any way for your job
performance?

Mr. P. Yes I had one there and I can't remember
what it was for (laughing) can't remember
I had one for something that I suggested for safety!

me: How many times have you experienced being on strike?

Mr. P: Three times (dad:) that's all heh.

Mr. P: Three long ones too.

dad: yes

~~Mr. P:~~

me: How does a strike... l

emphasize Mr. P: And we never got a penny, now they pay them and they give'em everything and we never got a penny.

me: How does strike actually begin?

include Mr. P: Well, the strike, they were looking for a raise, you were looking for raises and better, better working conditions and stuff like that, that's how they went on strike they couldn't get what they were looking

for.

me: How many employees did a strike usually involve?

Mr. P: I don't remember (laughing) there
were lots of stories going around different
ones I don't remember those ones.

Dad: Were you able to find a job when
you were on strike or anything else
to do or you just..

Mr. P. Well I went to Muskegon for a while
down to see my brother because my
brother was living ~~down~~ in Muskegon
so I went down there and I stayed
with him for a while and then I came
back when the strike was over (laughing)

me: What takes place at a union meeting
or a union rally?

Mr. P: starts to repeat the questions my dad tells him
Well, discussing different things about the
company and the union they would battle
over each other you know one would say

Mr. P: I don't remember (laughing) there were lots of stories going around different ones I don't remember those ones.

you
*
can't
a. Not give copy

Dad: Were you able to find a job when you were on strike or arranged help to do or you just..

Mr. P: Well I went to Murkison for a while down to see my brother because my brother was living ~~down~~ in Murkison so I went down there and I stayed with him for a while and then I come back when the strike was over (laughing)

me: What takes place at a union meeting or a union rally?

Mr. P: starts to repeat the questions my dad tells him Well, discussing different things about the company and the union they would battle over each other you know or would do that

me: What do you feel must be done to CEI to
remain competitive?

Mr. P: Which one are you one, he or do next page
says dad. #3 or say it then my dad says it
Mr. P: Mr. P repeats the question over again
to himself

Mr. P: (Laughing) that's something I don't know
you don't know I don't either nope I can't
answer that I don't know it pretty hard to
tell from day to day you don't know, even your
job that's right my dad says Mr. P: laughing

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

Mr. P: number? lived said. Then Mr. Pietro
repeats the question to himself. Deery (laughing)
that's a hard one too I can't make any suggestions
here.

get a good job for the C.C.I. or any mining
company, but you've got to have an education
you can get into the office and there's there's
good jobs (yep) says my dad

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

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

Well with my education that's about all I could
do, I was an eighth-grade drop-out. I never
went to high school or anything that's why
I had to go to work, and then days you had
to go to work I had to quit school, and go,
that's why I went in the mine.

Dad: And that wasn't unusual for that time
almost everybody did there most of the people

Mr. P: Yeah most of the people, hardly any of the
~~people~~ body went to high school lots
of people just eighth-grade and they that
was it they went and got a job,

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

Mr. P: Lets see, which one are you or here me: ad
three on that last dad: last one, that number three

Mr. P: Oh, number three looking back over the years
what impression stands out the most in your
mind concerning your association with C.C.I.?

Looking back over the years, well I think CCI
is a big help around here and if you wanted
to stay around here and work here I think
you should ~~stay~~ ^{go to} school and get a good
education and CCI will help you they'd
give you good jobs, huh? dad: ~~yes~~ Mr. P: if you
got the knowledge, lots of guys get good jobs for
C.C.I. In the office and different things
they went to school.

include

me: are you now or have you ever been apart of
the steel workers union?

Mr. P: Yes, I was a member I was

dad: When you started was there a union?

Mr. P: no, it came in right after, was it forty or forty one
when the union came in, so that's when I started '37

Mr. P: Oh, involved nearly two thousand
at that time, 1800 anyway yes, my
dad says

me: What is the purpose of a picket line and describe
what happens there?

Mr. P: Well, the purpose of a picket line was trying
to get the company what they were striking
for back, otherwise they wouldn't have
to picket line from going in, going across
the picket line.

me: Do you know of any interesting stories about
an incident on a picket line?

Mr. P: Mm,

me: In general what is the most interesting,
or unique story that you can remember from
any time the workers were on strike?

Mr. P: Oh, involved nearly two thousand
at that time, 1800 anyway, yes, my
dad says get this
to Mr. A

me: What is the purpose of a picket line and describe
what happens there?

Mr. P: Well, the purpose of a picket line was trying
to get the company what they were striking
for help, otherwise they wouldn't have
to picket line from going in, going across
the picket line.

me: Do you know of any interesting stories about
an incident on a picket line?

Mr. P: Mm,

me: In general what is also most interesting
or unique story that you can remember from
any time the workers were on strike?

I can't remember what that was, I've been trying to think
too old (laughing) wasn't that important (says dad)
at that time I ~~did~~ didn't think it was (laughing) no (says
dad)

me: At any time have you felt like changing jobs
or your career?

~~Q~~

Mr. T: Yes, lots of times I figured, but there was
nothing else to get, you had to stay there
what else would you get, well I had a job for
the Country Market county road Commission, but *include*
they weren't hardly paying anything there.
So then I went and got a job for CCI

me: What do you think the future holds for
the Pildon and Empire? (Dad) What think
of the future for the Pildon and Empire *me*?

Mr. T: Well right now I think it's a very good
you know it's gonna hold out for a long
time yet I think so.

Your pages
aren't numbered

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

Mr. P: (repeats the question over to himself) I don't know I suppose women can some women can
work just like men. ~~but hey?~~ ~~my dad~~

my dad: there were no women working in the mine?
when you were there?

Mr. P: No, not there that was just the last time
six years maybe that they started to hire in
the open pits not in the underground mine
(no my dad replies) I don't know I never worked
in the open pits at all so I can't tell you
anything about the open pit all mine were
underground.

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

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

Mr. P: Hmm, well give them ~~and~~ advice to stay in
school and get a good education that's what
I would give ~~in~~ them ~~it's~~ not, you can still

and ~~one of the~~ the other would answer him
that all it was, when I went to a meeting,
they'd just be arguing about do or do not

me: In your opinion, why is the steelworkers
union so important to the worker?

Mr. P: Well it was important because if there
wasn't any union the company could do
what they want with you, send you home
if they didn't like you, lay you off anytime
now with a union there they have to have
a reason to, good reason to lay you off or
send you home, that's why the union is
for to protect you and your job

include
+ quote part

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

Mr. P: I don't get him there

Dad: This is going to be his last question probably
is there any other interesting stories or anything
you like to add about your mining experiences

Mr. T: Oh, yeah well there's lot things
I could go on and on about the work
and when first started I'd I'd one time
my oldest brother and George Annals he was
the superintendant you know in Deshpening
and we went to Palmer and got a job in
the open pits there and I wasn't eighteen
then neither, so we all got hired but I looked
two much like a kid yet so I. ——— my
brother and this George Annals they were six
seven years older than me so we were
with a wheelbarrow clearing the dirt off ore
you know and open pits you got to take the
top off but with a wheelbarrow it was
hot ——— and that summer days and
every day this boss would come to me and
ask me for my birth certificate and I'd say
oh, I forgot and I didn't even have one and I'd
tell him I forgot everyday for about
two weeks he would ask me so I'd say I
forgot it again so one day he come and asked
me and it was hot and I was sweating

include
this
story

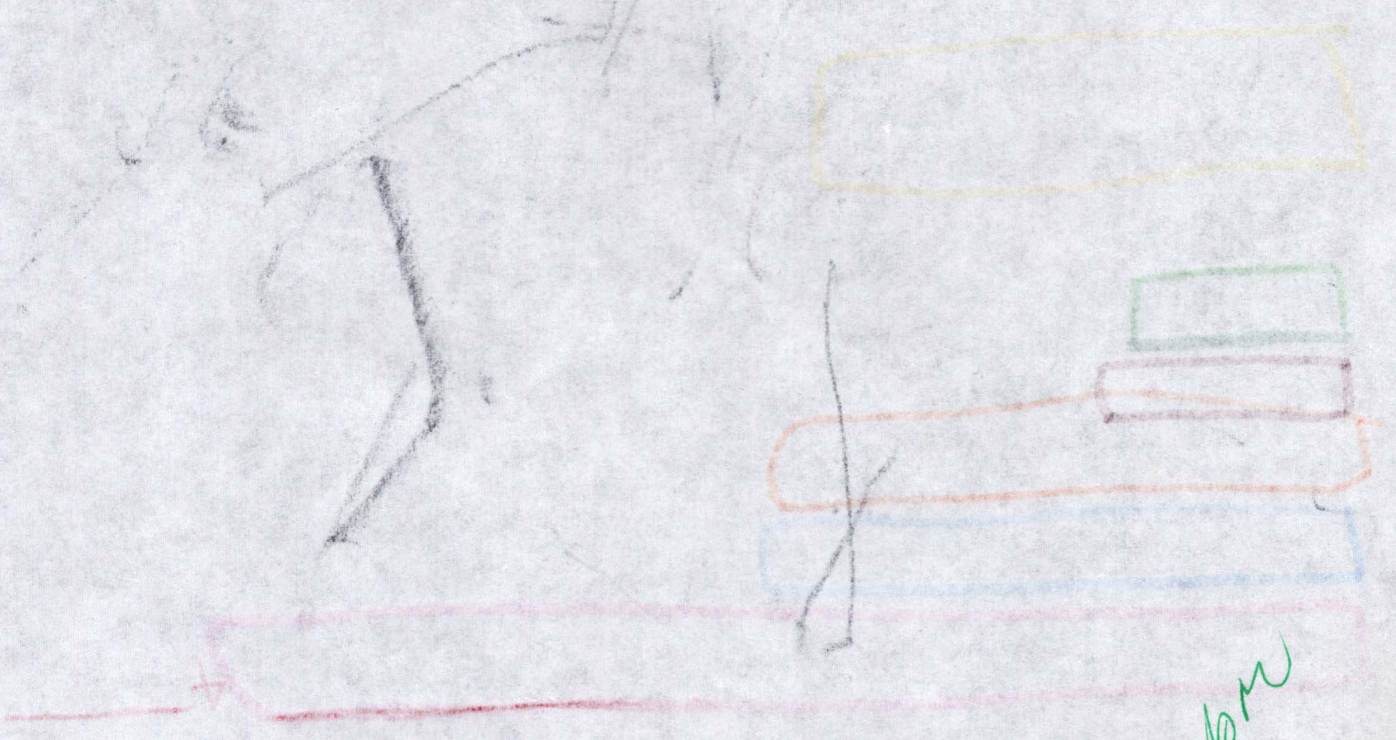
and I said ain't got any birth certificate
you can stick this job (laughing) I quit right
there I said that's enough I quit so
I quit that

me: thank you for your time.

Mr. P: Well that's all right I could tell you
lots of stories about underground you know
different things that happened down there
you know raising and different things ^{include}
it's, you could go on and on about different
mines you know wet tree you would be so
wet you had rubber suits on and standing
on the stage dragging this set of timbers and
water would almost knock you off the set
of the stage DAD: the temperature underground
was pretty much hot when I first started
all I had was a pair of gold seals and pair
of pants and a cloth bag with a little a leather
outfit to hold your carbide ^{lamp} on there so
then you were monkeying with that

for hours trying to get the thing to work right
putting more carbide in it and putting more
in it you couldn't see here from the wall
there and that's all we had when I first started
in the mine you know that big pit on right cut side
when you go to Ashpans it worked right under
that where that water is ~~D.A.F.~~ What one is that
by Angeles, by Galburg, right past the store
you know, I worked under there but (was the
a name to that section to mine O. I. that
was section to mine, you see the road went below
you know where that horse shoe curve is behind
there, there's where the road used to go ^{include}
around that big stockpile there on the side
of the road and the shaft was there and then
a little way around there there was a raise
coming up with a ladder that you if you couldn't
use the cage you know where you go up and down
well you could climb that I don't know how
many hundreds of feet maybe near 2000 feet
climbing and it would come right up to
the road where you can't see that the
road is in a different place now
where that stockpile is just the other side of that
was a big timber field

When they had all the timber, Dad: did they
have Lake Angelina drained then? Yeah there
was no water there, but ain't exactly Lake Angelina
Lake Angelina is a little ways over, see that
pit wasn't there that caused after the mine
was shut down, that's when that curved in



Carbon

various mines worked in

Safety

accidents

education

Conditions of mines + intercs

special projects or awards

stories about being on strike + other things about strikes