

Mike Joosten
interviewing Joe Poirier about <sup>Mining
+
Lumbering</sup>
My house in Green Creek Loc.

Jan. 2 1988

Me: ~~when~~ when and where were you
you born?

Mr. P.: I was born in Ispeming (pause) Oct.
-28, 1912.

Me: Where did you go to school?

Mr. P.: I went to a country school in Green
wood (pause) ~~and~~ and then I went to
high school for two years.

Me: ~~What~~ Were you in any school activities?

Mr. P.: NO, because we were living too far away.

(Pause) We were living 10 miles from town.

○ In them day they day they didn't have
no cars like ~~they~~ they ^{got} ~~have~~ today. Page 7

Mr. P.: They (Pause) had just old cars and horses, that's all.

Me: Was it hard getting to town?

Mr. P.: (Pardon

Me: Was it hard getting to town?

Mr. P.: ~~We~~ We use a, we ~~use~~ use a travel, well ~~where~~ going to high school, we use a travel, to, when my ^{dad} went to work in the morning at the mine, and then a, the Larmoar ~~the~~ boys there father would work at the mine and we'd, they'd pick us, they'd, a, we'd drive with them, a to the high school in there car.

Me: Did you go home for lunch?

~~got~~

Mr. P: No, we ate a, we^{ate} in school
or a, my uncle ran a little store and
we ate at the store.

Me: What was life like in the great depression?

Mr. P: Well it was rough. We use to work
in the woods in our spare time,
with my uncles, and a, course we always
had, we always had everything we wanted
we never, we lived on a farm we raised
all our own, meat and groceries you
know, and that.

Me: What was your first job you ever had?

Mr. P. First job, working for the township,
I was a, I was a teamster and during
the winter when they had lot of snow
I use to work on the township then,
I use to drive the first team, they would

Mr. P: have, they ~~use~~ use have four teams hooked onto the plow, and I use to drive the first team, ahead all the time, to break the trail.

Me: How many hours did you have to work?

Mr. P: Well I might work, any where from 8 hours to 14 hours.

Me: that's long?

Mr. P: ~~well it~~ ya it was.

Me: Did you have to working ~~every day~~ all the time every day?

Mr. P: No, I'd just a, drove in there when ~~it~~ it was snow ~~and~~ storms. That all.

Me: Did you, ever have a job in the Great Depression?

Mr. P: Yes I worked in the woods we worked ^{out} in the woods.

Me: Were you a lumber jack?

Mr. P: Nowe, I use to be the head teamster

Mr.P: in the woods for a while, and then a,
I ~~to~~ left ~~the~~ a, from that job I ~~what~~ went
to, I was on tractors and trucks, I use to
work on tractors and trucks all the
time.

Me: Was it, hard in the winter when it
was cold out?

Mr.P: Ya it was kinda cold at times,
I remember when I was driving
tractors, It was 40 below zero when
I jumped on that tractor in the
morning, so it was cold. It took two men
to put me up on ^{the} top of the tractor I had
so much clothes on.

Me: What was your first mine you ever worked
in?

Mr.P: The Michigan Gold Mine.

Me: Was it tough, to workin'?

Mr. P: No it wasn't to tough to work in, it was, we were ^{just} a small crew. I don't remember, ~~how many men there were~~ but a, it was just a little, a little minning project that was going on. Useta have four men under ground all the time, on three shifts. There was two makers, the miner, and the shift boss.

Me: How did you blast the rock?

Mr. P: They drilled it by, they drilled with machines. They had drilling machines, and then they had a jack a, (pause) ya drilling machines to drill it. Useta drill a cut a day, you know. And then they'd blast it and the makers would, they'd be muken in one drift and they'd be drilling in another drift. When the makers were muken that one they were drifting, they

were drilling in another drift so, just
to keep going you know.

Me: Was it, was it a straight down, the hole?

Mr. P: Ya, we went straight down, I don't
remember how deep the shaft was,
I think it was around 100 feet, we had
they had went down, in the shaft, so it was
straight up and down.

Me: How long did you work there?

Mr. P: (Pause) O I don't remember, I think it was (Pause)
I think it was three years, I worked there,

Me: What mine did you work in after that one?

Mr. P: I worked at the Atens, that was an iron
ore mine.

Me: Where was that?

Mr. P: Negaunee

Me: Negaunee

~~Me:~~

Me: Was it, open pit or

Mr.P: No, it was a regular mine you had to go down
a shaft. (interups)

Me: Was it hard, like or is it

Mr.P: No it was, I never did mine there I was more
of a, what they call ~~a~~ a sterner, I was all around,
where ever they needed a man I ~~went~~ went.

Me: So you didnt work as much as the, Michigan
Mine.

Mr.P: At the gold mine?

Me: ya.

Mr.P: Ya, I worked there till a; they Had a
electrical storm and it a, we had a bolt
of lightning and it burnt a big moter in there
so they had to close the mine down

Mr. P: They didn't have no money to go any further.

Me: What were the conditions like in the mine?

Mr. P: Well it was a o a, (pause) the conditions were good (pause) lets see now, a corse I didn't work underground to much I was just down there, off and on you know, I was all around, and at the gold mine I useta ~~be~~ all over I was all over like a bad weed. (Laugh) I was up on the landing, I was in the shops, I was underground, every place.

Me: When they blasted the rock was it dusty down there?

Mr. P: It was dusty for a while but ~~they~~ then useta sprinkle it with water.

Me: to clear up?

Mr. P: Ya it would clean up get the gas out. And then they'd open the air vents and blow it out you know blow the gas out.

Me: What was the conditions like in the ore mine?

Mr. P: In the ore mine, some places ~~it~~ was wet, lots of water, other places it was ~~so~~ hot it was about 120°. In the Iron ore Mine.

Me: It wasn't smokey like the Michigan mine was it?

Mr. P: No, because it was, they use to have lots of ~~draft~~ draft, lots of ~~draft~~ draft in the iron ore mine.

Me: Were you ever in the service?

Mr. P: No

Me: What was it like in World War II,
the life, listening to the radio
did you ever listen to the radio.

Mr. P: Ya we listened to the radio and, see what
was going on, was about the only we could
~~do~~ do you know.

Me: Do you remember any big days ^{that happened} in the war,
big events.

Mr. P: Well, a we wouldn't know much about
it any way you know, it was just ~~just~~
when ^{it was} in the paper you know, what you
could get ~~in~~ ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the radio.

Me: What was the last job you worked
for?

Mr. P: Now?

Me: ya.

Mr. P: Robins Flooring Mill,

Me: Where was that?

Mr. P: Ishpeming ~~is~~ here, ya

Me: Was it hard?

Mr. P: Well in the Mill, I never did work in the mill but, when you work in a mill its like any ^{other} Factory, you, the guy ahead sets the pace and you got to keep up with him, if he's working hard you got to work hard to keep up.

Me: Did you have to work, like every day?

Mr. P: Ya I worked every day, I was on Matnence.

Me: What year was that, that you worked there?

Mr. P: I worked there, I worked ~~is~~ first I worked in 47, 47 to 54, then I spent three years in Chicago, I come back
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Mr. P: then ~~the~~^I went ^{on} back then

I went on, I went back to the flooring mill then I was on maintenance there, see was I was, The First time I was there ~~warehouse~~ warehouse foreman, then when I came back from Chicago I ~~was~~ ~~when~~ went on maintenance.

Me: Now, are you in any activities now, that you do now?

Mr. P: Ya well, I'm a part time salesman, I work ~~at~~^{for} St. Vinneys, and play in a band, in fact two bands, and I belong to accouple of clubs.

Me: What kind of band do you play in?

Mr. P: Well we play ~~in~~^{for} a senior band, like at, one band is for playing at the homes like the Matter Home and Dcocks and all that and the other is a polka band.

Me: What do you play in the band?

Mr. P: Well I ~~play~~ play the drums.

Me: Do you remember any big places you played at, did you play at any big places?

Mr. P: Well we played, we played at the college that's about the biggest place, down at the university in Marquette.

Me: Northern?

Mr. P: ya.

Me: Did you ever play in a band before you graduated or anything?

Mr. P: No, I'd played in a band in the early 50's, I think from 1949 to 53 I played in a band then I used to play violin.

Me: What kind of music did you play?

Mr. P: We were playing Country and Western.

Me: Did um, what do you do in St. Vincent now?

Mr. P: Well we repair and we pick up, we repair and, and a, we pick up lots of stuff that people ~~want~~ want to donate, we go around and pick that up.

Me: Do um, Do you travel a lot with your band?

Mr. P: Not to far, we don't go to far.

Me: Just around the area?

Mr. P: Just around the area, ~~that~~ that's all.

Me: What kind of clubs are you in?

Mr. P: I belong to the Junction club, and then I belong to the Eagles, I use to belong to

the, a, the Negaunee Run + Gun Club, but I don't belong to that ^{one} any more.

Me: What is it like after your retired now, what is life like?

Mr. P: I don't know, I never retired yet. I'm going now more than I did when I was working.

Me: Well what is it like now though ~~what~~ ^{often}

Mr. P: Well now I can go when^{ever} I want,
and do ~~when~~^{what} I want, you know, I
don't have to punch the cards or nothing
you know, I can leave home ~~when~~ whenever
I want.

Me: Do you get payed for the, working at
st. Vincents?

Mr. P: No that's a donation.

Me: Just a Help others?

Mr. P: Help^{we} help others who needs the help, anybody
who needs help^{we help them out} with food and clothing.

Me: Down, what are the Eagles club ~~what~~ what is that?

Mr. P: That's in Negaunee.

Me: What kind of club is it?

Mr. P: It's a, ~~the club~~ it's a club for, it's a working
mans club, people who are workin belong to it.
And it, I geuss it has 300, 400 people in it.

Me: What was your last mine you worked in?

Mr. P: Bedeatens that's all that was in 19, 1945,

Me: Do you remember any experience in the mine

Me; that, stories you ever had, in the mine.
Mr. P: Ya I remember, I had to go for (pause)
lets see, I was a timber hoyster, when you
first start off you become a timber hoyster,
you get two guys, you a, one guy stays at the
bottom the other guy climbs up the raise,
then he asks the miner what they need,
and then a he raps on the pipe so many
times you got so many raps is a surten
kind of stuff they ~~were~~ wanted, so surten kind of
wood or some thing, and then you tie it up
and ease it down the rope and the tie it up
and send ^{up} it down to them, so, one day
I was on top, so I got done with this
bunch of miners, so the I had to go to
the next one, but it had caved in in
between, between me, you couldn't see
them at all, you had to ~~go~~ crawl
on your stomach, and then when you
got half way there, you couldn't go ahead
any more because a you couldn't move
you had to turn around in a little spot
and you had to back up, and if that timber

Mr. P: would have come down anywhere from a half inch to maybe to an inch, well it would be right there it would I never got out because it would be stuck ⁱⁿ there, I made one tripa there and I told them they were no ~~no~~ more, if you want stuff you will just have to rap on the pipe and we will give it to you, cause all the timber were all down and crossed like that.

Me: Well I think we covered all of it so far, we got all of it.

Me: O.k. were back, and um when you were talking about logging you said you were a teamster, what is that?

Mr. P: A teamster is a guy ~~who~~ that drives ~~the~~ horses in the woods and he they a, after the cutters cut them down and they take them and bring them down to landing were the are jamers, and the jamer would load the

on ~~slays~~ slays or ~~logs~~ trucks
what ever ^{in the winter time} in them days they use to
be slays and then a take them down
to the saw mill or down to the landing
were they had railroad cars, and
then some of the logs they ~~went~~
went to the saw mill, and then
in the spring they'd start up the saw
mill and cut them up into lumber.

Me: And um, when you were ~~at~~ talking about
what was life ~~at~~ like in W.W.II, was it
easy to get a job or was it ~~at~~ hard?

Mr. P: O it was easy you could get a job
any place then ya, you could get a job
any ~~at~~ place ~~then~~ during the war, cause
every body was working for men.

Me: During the war?

Mr. P: Ya because they were taking all
the young people for the war, the
ones that didn't have no job in the mine
or if you were in the they wouldn't
let you go, you had to work in the
mine.

Mr. P: But if you didn't work in the mine
or no place where you weren't helping
to war you would ~~be in the~~ war.
_{take you to the}

Me: Why did the people in the mine have to
work, stay there?

Mr. P: Well they were making a, well the were
use iron ore for making boats and trucks
and all that, for the war so they, they were
worked, they were just as important as
the soldiers, in a way they said, you know,
cause they needed them ~~men~~ men to, make
all that iron, for the war.

Me: Well o.k. ~~That's~~ that's about it.