

Brad Cummins's
Interview with John Reddy

Me: This is Brad Cummins and it is December 1, 1993. This is my Red Dent interview of John Reddy. It is at his house on 255 S. Rose Street in Ishpeming Michigan.

When and where were you born?

Mr. R: I was born in Platterville, Wisconsin on June one in 1933.

Me: O.K. What are the names of your parents.

Grandpa: Steven and Elizabeth Reddy

Me: What did your parents do for a living?

Grandpa: My father was a farmer, ^{part time} and then later he was an independent trucker, and then he was also a mechanic.

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

Grandpa: I don't have any sisters, but I have two brothers. They are Michael, and Steven, and Ralph.

Me: Are you currently married, and if so, what is your spouse's name?

Grandpa: My spouse's name is Jan.

Me: What are the names of your children?

Grandpa: Jacquelin, Jill, and Jeffrey

Me: O.K. How long have you been working in the iron industry?

Grandpa: About 31 years

Me: Have you worked for C.C.I. all this time?

Grandpa: No, I worked for a couple other mining companies before I came to work for Cleveland Cliffs. I worked for Magma Copper in Superior, Arizona and Kennecott Copper ^{Ray} Mines Division and the Tracy Mine, Jones and ^{Laughlin} Lockland Steel which is now XTV Steel, and I worked at the Mather B mine, the Republic Mine, the Humboldt Mine, CCI General Offices and General Shops.

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

Grandpa: Well, we were living in Arizona at the time, and we wanted to come back and live in the Midwest. include

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

Grandpa: I don't have any relatives that have worked in the iron ore industry.

Me: O.K. What are the names of the various mines or buildings you have worked in?

Grandpa: I think I just gave you the names of all, I've worked at the Tracy and the Jones and ^{Laughlin} Lockland.

Me: Buildings? Different buildings

Grandpa: Buildings. Oh, the General Offices.

Me: O.K.

Me: Over the years, what kinds of duties have you performed for C.C.I.?

Grandpa: I've been an engineer, a superintendent, and a manager

Me: In as much detail as possible, please describe the main duties of your current job.

Grandpa: Well, currently I manage the central repair facility, which is called the Brownstone, or Central Shop, and we repair mining equipment and rebuild mining machines include + quote

Me: Is there anything else that you do?

Grandpa: Oh, I also manage the idle properties such as Republic and some of the other idle buildings that we've got scattered about the county. include

Me: O.K. Did this job require any special training? Higher education? If so, please describe it

Grandpa: I'm a graduate engineer with a BS degree in Mining Engineering. include

Me: Please describe any special machinery or equipment that you use on the job.

Grandpa: Well, we use welding machines, lathes, a large press stake, tending wheels, drill presses, things of that nature. include

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

Grandpa: Ensuring that we produce a quality, ~~use~~ work and produce superior quality products. possible quote

Me: Looking back over the years, what was the most challenging or difficult duty you have performed, and explain why.

Grandpa: Well, I think the most difficult thing was making the change from managing a production-type operation to managing a maintenance organization, because all my career I've been associated with production.

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Me: Over the years, what have you enjoyed the most about your job?

Grandpa: I guess the many challenges it presents and because each day is a little bit different - variety in the job.

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Me: What are the biggest responsibilities of your job?

Grandpa: I guess managing my unit as efficiently and as safely as possible because the jobs of other people depend on me doing the best job that I can do.

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Me: If it applies to you, describe the most dangerous situations you have been in.

Grandpa: Well, this happened many years ago. It was the first year I got out of college, and I went to work for a Western mine. It was a deep mine, a very hot mine, and one day I was given a job assignment to go check a pump at the bottom of a shaft. The shaft was a little used shaft that was about 5000 feet deep, and my partner and I went underground and then we, when we got to the bottom of the shaft, and we had to ladder down about 50 feet, and we got down to the bottom and we found out we were in poor air, and we found the leak, and we knew we had a problem. The temperature was over 100 degrees and the humidity was so high it was raining, and we did our checking, and decided we had less than two minutes to do our checking and then we'd begin to climb out, and when we climbed the last 50 feet,

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we got to the first level. When we reached the door ~~is~~ where we had entered the shaft, it took both of us to open the door that one of us could have easily opened when we entered the area. This was when I was young and inexperienced and it taught me a valuable lesson.

Me: Could you describe the most unique or perhaps humorous situations you have seen over the years.

Grandpa: Oh, I suppose there are a couple of them. Both of them involved underground. In one case, there was a new crew going on shift and we were walking down the drift, and this was a new employee. It was his first day underground, and he wasn't familiar with the noises of underground, and one of the miners had started a fan, and this fan made a terrible racket, and this poor fellow thought the place was caving in, and he tried to crawl under one ore car, and it was a very small space and he ended up covered with mud. Of course it was the beginning of the shift and he spent the rest of the day in muddy clothes. There was one case, another case, where we were doing some sampling, and we sent a young fellow out to do some sampling. And the way you did the sampling was that they would, took a, you had a rope that was knotted every 18 inches or so, and you threw that over the ore pile, and every place there was a knot, you grabbed a sample, this was known as random sampling, and they sent this young lad down to take these samples, and he was gone for several hours, and finally, someone went to look for him, to find out what was taking him so long, and they found him waiting to come up

include

in the bridge from underground, and there he stood with all this rope, and he had untied all the knots and tried to tie all the samples of rock into each one of the knots. He spent hours doing it.

Me: Please describe your working conditions.

Grandpa: Well, I guess its more or less a shop environment, an office environment. Nothing unusual about it.

Me: O.K. Have you ever won any awards or have you been recognized in any way for your job performance.

Grandpa: Well, we won an award recently at Republic. It was an environmental award for retaining the Tailings area out there. We planted grasses and so forth. It was ~~a bunch of~~ once a barren area and now its full of grass, and the animals have come back, birds and so forth. Its pretty rewarding to turn something back in to what it was before.

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

Grandpa: I think the future of the Empire and the Tilden is very good. The ore bodies contain large reserves, the plant equipment is constantly being improved, so its state-of-the-art equipment. I think they have a very bright future.

quote

Me: Well, what does the future look like for the iron and steel industry in general?

Grandpa: Well, the iron and steel industry is, it's a mature industry, I don't think it's going to experience any rapid growth. It will be a gradual, slow growth. *quote*

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

Grandpa: Well, in this day and age, in order for an industry to stay on top, they're going to have to continuously stay on the edge, the cutting edge of the technology that's needed necessary to produce efficiency, in our industry anyway. *include + quote*

Me: What do you think has been the key to success for C.C.I. where other companies have failed?

Grandpa: Well, I think it's been the knowingsness of the company to invest in people, equipment, and research. *include + quote*

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

Grandpa: I think it will be remembered as a pioneering company with dedicated workers. *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?

Grandpa: Well, over the years they've become equal in the workplace, and I think the numbers of women in jobs traditionally held by men will continue to grow.

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

Grandpa: Well you need to be educated in a discipline that's needed by the iron mining industry or to be sufficient in one of the trades or crafts.

Me: In a related question, what advice would you give in general to the young people of today?

Grandpa: Well, I think that a student of today should decide what your goals are early and prepare yourself with the knowledge and the skills needed to accomplish them. *quote*

Me: You're on the negotiating committee for when there is a strike, and what happens when you're negotiating?

Grandpa: Well, negotiating is exactly what it means. It's a give-and-take situation where the Union represents the employees. They have certain goals, also the company has certain goals and, which they want to mutually come to terms and agree to a contract that's mutually beneficial to both sides. *include*

Me: O.K. Please describe what you enjoy doing in your spare time.

Grandpa: Oh, I ride a snowmobile, and do woodworking.

Me: What kind of woodworking -

Grandpa: Teasing my grandchildren.

Me: What kind of woodworking do you like to do?

Grandpa: Oh, a little bit of everything. Just small little pieces.

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

Grandpa: Yes, that's a tough question. I don't know, if I had to do it all over again what I would do. I might try something different.

Me: Well, what would you try if you did something different?

Grandpa: I have no idea.

Me: O.k.

Grandpa: I guess I'd probably end up doing the same thing I did before.

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

Grandpa: I guess the dedication of the people that work for the company. They're a group that works together, working together. It's a close-knit community everybody kind of chips in and does their job and does what they have to do in order to make the growing concerns. → quote

Me: O.K. Before we end the interview, is there anything else that comes to mind that you'd like to add?

Grandpa: The Packers are gonna beat the Bearson Sunday. (laughing)

Me: (laughing) O.K.

Me: Well, thanks for taking some time off to do this interview.

Grandpa: Well, thank you, Brad.

excellent
info

job duties - things having to do with his job^{at CCI} - red ●

places worked at before CCI - green

dangerous situations - orange ●

humorous situations - purple ●

future - blue ●

training - brown ●

rewards - black ●

opinions ●

why^{he} worked in the mining industry ●

negotiating ●