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Deanna Kauppila
interview with Soini Saari

ME: I am Deanna Kauppila and ~~it~~ it is Dec. 4, 1993. I am interviewing Soini Saari for Red Dust. It is on Mining. I am at my grandpa's house in Republic. When and where were you born?

Mr. S.: I was born on July 13, 1916. in Republic

ME: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. S.: My father's name was Michael and my mother's name was Mary.

ME: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. S.: My father worked in the mine and my mother was just a homemaker.

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

Mr. S.: I had one sister, her name is Ili and one brother Eddie and I have two half brothers.

ME: Are you currently married?

Mr. S.: Yes I am, I've been for 37 years.

ME: What is your spouse's name?

Mr. S.: Mary

ME: What are the names of your children?

Mr. S.: Well I have four daughters. The oldest is Connie then there's Bonnie Jo, Mary Kay and Lori and one son Danny.

ME: How long have you been in the iron industry?

Mr. S.: I think I started in 1948. About 32 and $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

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

Mr. S.: Well there really wasn't much around then and I worked in the woods for some years, found out the mine was a steadier place to work, pay was better *include + quote*

ME: Please name those relatives who have worked in the iron industry?

Mr. S.: My father, he worked in the mine, I had some cousins that worked in the mine, a few brothers in laws *include*

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

MR.S.: Well I started out in the Mathus & mine which was underground. Then the Mathus B mine, I worked there that was an underground mine too. Then I ended up working in the Republic mine for the remainder of my time till I retired.

ME: Over the years what kinds of duties have you performed for CCI?

MR.S.: When I was underground I was a motor man and a scraper man. In the Republic mine I worked on the plotations. I don't know this with him check with him

ME: In as much detail as possible please describe the main duties of your current job. if you retired describe the duties of the job you had.

MR.S.: I had to take samples of ore to see how high the iron content was. Then you had to adjust your chemical reagent to bring the iron ore up or whatever. Just ~~basically~~ basically keeping the area clean too.

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

MR.S.: No not really, you just got trained right on the job. include

ME: Please describe any special machinery or equipment that you used on the job?

MR.S.: I don't think there's nothing special.

ME: What was the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

MR.S.: Well the most difficult part was when something would plug up and this was very messy, very time consuming and it took a long time to get things going again. include

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

Mr. S: I don't think there was nothing.

ME: What were the biggest responsibilities of your job?

Mr. S: Just make sure everything ran smoothly, that's all

ME: If it applies to you describe the most dangerous situation you've

Mr. S: I must have been lucky because I've never been ever been in in any dangerous situations.

ME: Have you been involved or witnessed any accidents?

Mr. S: No I haven't

ME: Could you describe the most unique or humorous situation you've ~~ever been in~~ ever seen over the years?

Mr. S: I can't think of any.

ME: Please describe your working conditions.

Mr. S: Well, the mines are awful noisy, and there dirty otherwise it was pretty good. ^{include}

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

Mr. S: Well safety has come a long way it's great there keeping safety programs its saved alot of lives + injuries, it ^{saves} saved the company alot of money when people don't get injured.

ME: HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE DUTIES OF YOUR JOB CHANGE OVER THE YEARS?

Mr. S: They've only changed when I worked from underground to above ground when I came to Republic they basically stayed the same.

ME: Please describe what your co-workers were like.

MR.S: ~~well~~ Well I worked with several different crews and they were nice people to work with and there were lots of fun times there was joking ^{in class} around at times. I don't know of any special stories or anything. We had a lot of fun.

ME: During your career were you involved in any special projects or have you implemented any new programs.

MR.S: no

ME- Have you ever won any awards or have you been ~~never~~ recognized in any way for your job performance.

MR.S: well, awards I've won safety awards, gifts for years of service I've had.

ME: At any time have you felt like changing jobs?

MR.S: Well I guess we all have thought about changing careers, I've been satisfied I guess. You thought about changing when there was a strike.

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

MR.S: I think they will keep going like there going right now. Maybe a slight increase. They will be fine.

ME: What does the future look like for the iron and steel industry?

MR.S: There's not gonna be any big boom times, they will keep going. ^{in general} Our country needs steel, they will be OK. quote

ME: What do you feel must be done in the future for CCI to remain competitive?

MR. S: Well you have to make sure you keep kind of a more efficient and you know the work force has to be more productive and keep striving to get more workers, watch the wage increase to make sure these reasonable + moderate nothing extravagant. Sometimes so many jobs can be done by subcontractors and it might be a good idea to get them in there and do ~~so~~ many jobs cheap. *include + quote*

ME: What do you think has been the key to the success of CCI where other companies have failed?

MR. S: Well I just that informed on it but [we have a good workforce here and maybe that's one reason we have alot of materials.] *quote*

ME: Looking far into the future how do you think history will remember Cleveland Cliffs iron company and its workers.

MR. S: I think back to the old times [there were a hearty breed of people that came and started they did a fine job.] *good quote*

ME: How has the role of women changed the industry + what direction do you think it will take in the future.

MR. S: Well there was no women when I first started working, what I see right now is women are good workers there will be more hired.

ME: WHAT SKILLS DO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY NEED TO DEVELOP IF THEY PLAN TO WORK FOR CCI Someday.

MR. S: Well they will have to get good grades, work hard it's more competitive out there now. They will have to get a good education. They will have to develop the skills needed to work ~~at~~ there. *include*

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

Mr. S: They should stay in school, get good grades and study hard.
They should get as much education as possible.

ME: Are you now or have you ever been a member of the steel workers union?

Mr. S: Oh yeah, I've been a member ~~to~~ right along.

ME: Have you ever experienced being on strike?

Mr. S: Yeah about 3 or 4 times.

ME: How does a strike actually begin?

Mr. S: We have negotiation union members negotiation things that we want, better working conditions, better wages. Then we bring it to the company.

ME: How many employees does a strike actually involve?

Mr. S: Usually all the employees that are under that contract.

ME: What is the purpose of the picket line and describe what happens there.

Mr. S: Basically it tells what's going on and a lot of times keeping out replacement workers cause we don't want them to taking our work.

ME: DO you know of any special story of an ^{incident} ~~incident~~ at the picket line?

MR. S.: NO not really

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

MR. S.: I can't think of anything, it's hard to remember.

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

MR. S.: Well a union meeting is when you get together and bring up issues and something you can vote upon. Discuss these issues + the working conditions and what we wanna bring up in our new contract.

ME: In your opinion why is the steelworkers union so important to the workers?

MR. S.: Well it gave us workers good working conditions, it gave us a good standard of living and so forth. include

ME: Please describe what you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Mr. S.: I do alot of reading, reading news. I take my dog for walks, I go out in the woods I do some fishing and hunting. I go to my camp.

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

Mr. S.: If it was the same time same situation I'm sure I'd do the same thing.

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

Mr. S.: Well there were good years sometimes good benefits and good insurances and retirements reasonable enough

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

Mr. S.: no, well I don't think so [its just been a good life.] quote

safety - yellow -

job requirements - orange

future - blue

working conditions - purple

strikes etc - green

where worked

Opinions on job etc - red