

John Tyynismaa's  
interview with  
Victor Tyynismaa

Intro:

This is John Tyynismaa, interviewing my father; Victor Tyynismaa at our home in Ishpeming, Michigan on ~~February 21st~~ February 21st.

Me:

When and where were you born?

Vic:

I was born in Negaunee, and raised in Ishpeming.

Me:

When were you born?

Vic:

When I was born was November first, 1946.

Me:

What were the names of your parents?

Vic:

My mother's name was Lyla Ali ~~Tyynismaa~~ ~~Tyynismaa~~ Tyynismaa Maki, or Maki Tyynismaa. My dad was Ans August Tyynismaa.

Me:

How many ~~to~~ brothers and sisters did you have?

Vic: I had one sister, Anna May, and two brothers; Robert and Richard.

Me: When were you married?

Vic: Married in October of 1973.

Me: To whom are you married?

Vic: To Barbara Bess.

Me: Relating to your younger years again, where did you go to school?

Vic: Well I started my lower grade school at Ridge Street School, in Ishpeming, and then went on to the new C.L. Phelps School at the time, then graduated from Ishpeming High School. Then I went on to college after, in my later years.

Me: What college did you go to?

Vic: I went to Northern Michigan.

Me: What kinds of things did you do as a teenager?

Vic: Well, I did a lot of fishing, as a teenager, and I worked a lot. I played a lot of pool as a teenager. I started playing pool as a real young man. (pauses) I guess, as a later teenager, I ~~was~~ attended dances, and those kinds of school functions, and stuff. Pretty typical

Vic: (continued) teenage stuff.

Me: Okay, well where did you get your first job?

Vic: My first real ~~job~~ job was with a cement contractor in Ishpeming. I worked for George Swanson as a general laborer; hauling blocks while he was building basements, and mixing mortar, and supplying enough blocks and mortar for three or four masons. I worked a summer there, and then I got my real, ~~first~~ ~~job~~ I guess, full time job would be, ~~of~~ of mine was at the flooring mill. I worked there that fall.

Me: How old were you when you got that job?

Vic: Well, I was seventeen years old when I got my first job with George Swanson, and then I was turning eighteen years old when I got my job at the flooring mill.

Me: What did you do on your first job?

Vic: Well, the first job I was a laborer, and then when I went on to the flooring mill, my first job also was, just general laborer, and (pauses) what not I guess, nothing in particular as far as a job. I used to just stack piles of wood, and then I went on to separate <sup>wood</sup> grades of wood, until I went into the service.

Me: Is there any that sticks out in your mind about that job?

Vic: Oh there was, uh (pauses) just a particular individual that I used to remember that was a foreman there. He was a real nice guy. He had a special way of getting other people's attention, making a certain noise that whenever he made that noise everyone, everyone's head turned to see who he was making that particular noise to. It was like a yodel. It was kind of funny every time he did that, because everytime, no matter who he was yodling to everyone turned to him so that he could just point to you, if he wanted your attention for some reason or another.

Me: You said you were in the military, right?

Vic: Mm hm,

Me: Okay, well what were some of your experiences there?

Vic: Well, uh, I had gone into the Marine Corp in 1967, and had a lot of experiences going ~~down~~ through boot camp, of course. But then as time went on I had a lot of good experiences. I went to Vietnam, and I met a lot of nice people, and it was an experience just being in Vietnam alone, going through the circumstances and stuff. Other than that it's just mostly the experiences of meeting a lot of different

Vic: (continued) people from all over the country.

Me: Well, when did you get out of the military?

Vic: I got out in 1970.

Me: And, ~~did~~ did you, well what other kinds jobs did you have?

Vic: Well, when I ~~got~~ <sup>went</sup> back, when I got out of the military I had my job guaranteed while I was in the service so I went back to my job at the flooring mill for a few years, and I started to apply for work at Cleveland Cliffs in the meantime. Then I got hired on with Cleveland Cliffs in the early 70's.

Me: What so far has been your favourite job?

Vic: Well I've had some real nice jobs at Cleveland Cliffs. Probably some of the better ~~of~~ jobs that I recall while I was working there would be; an automotive serviceman, and had a wide variety of work. The time went by good. It was interesting doing real slight automotive, automotive work; changing oil on big trucks and loaders, and those types of things. And, uh, as far as Cleveland Cliffs goes, probably

Vic: (continued) my best job that I enjoyed most<sup>6</sup> was the last job that I had as a mill linerman. But other than that, other than Cleveland Cliffs probably my best job to present is owning my own pool room.

Me: Why did you choose to try that career?

Vic: Well as far as, uh, going back again to Cleveland Cliffs I chose it because the security was better than the flooring mill at the time, and some of the jobs that I chose while I was in Cleveland Cliffs just seemed like they were interesting. But primarily the pool room was pretty obvious because I'd been playing pool for over thirty years, and I just enjoy pool a lot, and I felt as though the pool room would be the ultimate job for me.

Me: What's the most rewarding part of the job?

Vic: The most rewarding job, (corrects himself) part of owning the pool room is just, being there and seeing a lot of young people and older people come in, and use the facility, and enjoy themselves, and from time to time giving lessons and helping beginners learn how to play pool a little bit and enjoy the game.

Me: What's the hardest part?

Vic: Well, the hardest part sometime is, keeping up the mechanics of the pool room, and the maintenance of it, and sometimes, oh, maintaining (pauses) maintaining order in the place. Sometimes it can get pretty disruptive, but the hardest part is when you have to hollar at someone for doing something they shouldn't be doing.

Me: Has anything really strange happened at all, in that job?

Vic: Well as far as in the pool room business, no, I don't think, uh, I don't think it's been, it's been pretty good. It's a well used place, and we have a wide variety of people coming in there, so I guess there would be a lot of little strange things that would happen in there, but as far as working with Cleveland Cliffs I guess I've had a few strange experiences. One when I was on a liner crew the mill and all of a sudden I had heard a thundering crash. Two of our guys on our crew were working inside of the mill, and our lead man was right in front of it in the opening, and I was right behind him. We knew what had happened. What had happened was a three-hundred pound liner had fallen from the top of the mill, and the two guys down below it had fallen ~~and~~ down and hit the rail, and hit the leg and it had knocked a base out of the

Vic: (continued) guy's hand that was standing there.

Luckily it had just barely missed him. ~~Other-~~ Otherwise it ~~would have~~ obviously would have done some real serious damage to whoever it hit. The lights went out, and we both feared, up above that, both men were injured seriously if not worse. We both kind of shuddered at the thought to shine our flashlights there to see if they were okay, and we were pretty thankful that they weren't hurt at all. It shook everybody up pretty much.

Me: Yeah, I can imagine it would. Well what have been your biggest responsibilities of your pool hall job?

Vic: Well the responsibilities of course is keeping it clean, and keeping it looking nice, ~~and~~ and making sure we have things there; inventory for people to purchase, and the emphasis is on keeping ~~the~~ our place neat, and clean, and presentable to anyone who walks in.

Me: What are your hobbies or leisure activities?

Vic: Well obviously I, well my biggest hobby is playing pool; that's my hobby and leisure at the same time. Otherwise fishing, I enjoy motorcycling, I enjoy fishing an awful lot, and well I used to enjoy woodworking



Vic: (continued) an awful lot, but I don't do as much as I used to.

Me: Well have you been <sup>involved</sup> in any clubs or organizations?

Vic: Well I'm a member of a lot of former-military clubs, a member of Amvets, and VFW, and Disabled American Veterans, and those types of clubs. I'm also a member of the Moose Lodge in Marquette. Other than that, ~~no I'm~~ not really active in a lot of clubs, but I am a member in a lot of clubs.

Me: Were you ever a member of a union at any time?

Vic: Yeah, I've been a member of Steel Workers' Union since I got hired by Cleveland Cliffs, which I've been working for then now, approximately twenty-three years, and I've been a union member from beginning to present. I was a union officer with them. I was an active member

Vic: (continued) member & guess I should state, all the way through, and I was active to a point where I was elected officer in the early 80s as a treasurer and grievance chairman, and on other committees as well. But yes, I was very active as a union member.

Me: Well if you ~~do~~ had to do it all over again, would you choose the same career.

Vic: Oh, I think there's no doubt that I'd choose pretty much the same careers. They've been, they've all been good to me. Working ~~with~~ Cleveland Cliffs has been good to me, and of course opening and operating the pool room has been, has been the highlight of my career, and my life. This is something, as far as the pool room goes, is something I've wanted to do, because I've been a pool player forever, and uh, opening the pool room is just something I've lived for.

Me: Okay. Well, in closing, do you have anything you would like to add about anything?

Vic: No, I can't think of anything in particular.

Me: Okay, well thank you for letting me interview you.

Vic: You're welcome.