

Alison Hebein's  
interview with Myles Marietti

me: I am Alison Hebein and it is December first 1993. I am interviewing Myles Marietti for iron mining for National Mine's Red Dust. We are at his house in Ishpeming Michigan. When and where were you born?

Mr. M: I was born in March of 17<sup>th</sup> 1919 of North Lake.

me: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. M: Vernadina O'Best and Bartholomew Marietti.

me: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. M: Well my father was basically a miner and my mother was a homemaker - worker.

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

Mr. M: Well starting with the women is Minnie, Jenny, Anne, Mafalda, Charlotte, Rose Marie and Evelyn.

me: Wow!

Mr. M: And the boys are John, Albert, Jim and Francis. There are two dead, a boy and a girl dead too.

me: What is your spouse's name?

Mr. M: Lila

me: What are the names of your children?

Mr. M: Michael, Susan, Peter and Myles Junior.

me: How long did you work in the iron industry?

Mr. M: a little over 40 years.

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

Mr. M: That was the most advantageous, well-paying job at the time *possible quote*

me: O.K.

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

emphasis on family involvement

Mr. M: My father, and my oldest brother John, my brother Jim and my brother Albert worked on the railroad that hauled the iron ore.

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

Mr. M: I worked in the Lloyd mine, the mother A and B mine and then I worked at the General Shop.

include

me: Wow! Over the years what kinds of duties have you performed for CCI?

possible guide

Mr. M: Just about every job underground and I went to the school in Marquette that they have for teaching welding and stuff like that and then I became a welder and I worked on that for 18 years.

include

me: O.K. Could you please describe the duties of the jobs you held?

Mr. M: Well, it was pretty varied <sup>it was</sup> but welding and fabricating and stuff like working with blueprints and it was interesting.

include

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

Mr. M: Yes, it did, like I said we went to this IRA; that school in Marquette I forget what it is called. They turned it into the Jacobetti Center later on and we went there primarily to be maintenance men at the Empire cause the Empire was starting up at that time.

include

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

Mr. M: Well, it was welding <sup>machines</sup> materials breakthrough bending the metal ~~bars~~ for cutting it, rolls for forming ~~it~~ pretty much of a variety.

include

me: O.K.

Me: Thinking back over the years, what was the most challenging or difficult duty you had to perform, and could you explain why?

Mr. M: Mr. Marietti laughingly says, If I tell you you wouldn't believe me. Underground there are lots of challenges and difficult jobs. On surface at the shops it was a little bit on the different side. I couldn't really put my finger on what was the most challenging or difficult part of it. I've been gone too long. Bear off for almost 12 years.

emphasize  
difficult  
be funny  
funny  
m.m.

Me: That's all right! Over the years what have you enjoyed most about your job?

Mr. M: Well, I liked the job to begin with, which is a big help and it was close to home, and there some pretty good guys there.

Me: O.K. What are the biggest responsibilities of your job?

Mr. M: Well, to take a blue print and turn out what was on the blue print. He laughs.

possible  
guess

Me: If it applies to you could you describe the most dangerous situations that you have been in?

Mr. M.: Underground there were a lot of dangerous situations. Too many to mention I would say. Especially in the type of mine we were in. So that about explains that. I couldn't put my finger on any one incident.

Me: Have you been involved in or have you witnessed any accidents?

Mr. M: Well I've broken bones, fingers, a leg and I don't recall anybody else getting hurt that was working with me. Problems underground and stuff like that underground.

include

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

Mr. M. laughs and says, I could tell you a dandy about this old timer that was trying to put his underwear on. He had one sleeve inside out, he turned that one and <sup>winter</sup> underwear! he turned the other one back the other way. It took him about ten minutes to get his underwear on! And then again, these fellows had water guns and they'd catch the guy when he got all of his clothes off and they had big overalls on they had him in there, then they'd squirt him with that water. And of course, on occasion they <sup>had</sup> guys that were goofy and they took a run through the woods. include

Me: <sup>o.k.</sup> Could you please describe your working conditions?

Mr. M.: Underground there were some dangerous conditions and other places but particular the underground they were pretty dangerous at times. On surface it wasn't ~~that~~ <sup>quite as</sup> bad.

Me: <sup>mm hmm</sup> have safety standards changed and what improvements do you see ~~are~~ yet to be made?

Mr. M. Well, in my opinion the CCI had the best safety standards around here. They always kept working on it and kept improving it and of course what people don't understand is that safety is their job too and that they got to watch themselves too. You can't have a guy watching you <sup>possible quite</sup> all of the time.

me: Yup. O.K. How have you seen the duties of your job change over the years?

Mr. M. More machinery that about describes the update on machinery all the time which taken away, they can do lots more with the people *include*

me: Could you please describe what your co-workers were like?

Mr. M. Like I said for the most part they were pretty good. Some of them weren't. But generally I think they were a pretty good bunch of guys. And I guess we run into a bad one wherever you are. Special stories, I can't think of any. There are but it wouldn't apply to this.

me: During your career were you involved in any special projects, or have you implemented any new programs?

Mr. M. : The special projects we were assigned to the job at the Humboldt mine to build a tank 62 ft. across and let's see, about 12 ft. high with machines that were brand new on the job. It turned out really well. *include + full*

me: Mr. M. Hmmm, Have you ever won any awards or have you been recognized in any way for your job performance?

Mr. M: Not really, not really. Only awards was for length of service. That's about it.

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

Mr. M.: No, not at all. I was pleased with my job and didn't feel like moving any other place and as it turned out, there were many different companies on the range at that time and I just happened to get with the one that was still going. The other ones ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~owned~~ <sup>owned</sup> by a lot and all of them, they're all gone now. So ~~so~~ I wound up with a pension <sup>include</sup>

me: O.K., On opinions and insights, what do you think the future holds for the Tilden and the Empire.

Mr. M. Well, as long as they can be competitive they're all right. I was going to say something else but I have to wait for that to develop. They are competitive right now. They've got a good bunch running them and they're upgrading their machinery all the time and now they get a six year contract so that would give them a chance to keep things going for a longer period of time. <sup>include</sup>

me: O.K. what does the future look like for the iron and steel industry in general?

Mr. M: It's hard to say now. I don't know what the future is at the pits there, how much more material they got and how lucrative it would be to go farther down. Up to now in the foreseeable future it looks all right.

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

Mr. M: They have to keep abreast of the situation and keep their things going just like their ~~conspiring~~ open up <sup>the</sup> a public or a different deal ~~they gotta~~ keep a little bit ahead of the game all the time so they can be competitive. *include*

me: O.K. What do you think has been the key to the success of CCI when other companies have failed?

Mr. M: For one thing, around here CCI was the biggest of the bunch. Although some of them were bigger in other areas away from here & didn't have the acreage or the size of the <sup>mines</sup> ~~land~~ that the CCI. The CCI had a bunch of mines at one time than ~~CCI had~~ <sup>had</sup> they developed the underground mines on the surface mines which helped them considerably too. *include*

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

Mr. M: Well, I think they'll go down and they got a period of history were they'll be remembered. Especially around here what kept it going. After all that the primary employer around here. Not only the people that are working for CCI but the people around that deal with CCI too. Plus the workers are buying stuff at the store and stuff like that. *include*

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

Mr. M: Well, they're in the office situation and that they're doing it but some of them even work out in where it used to be miners and men's jobs and they've taken over a lot of those and done a pretty good job of it.

<sup>O.K.</sup> me: What skills do the young people of today need to develop if they plan to work for CCI someday?

Mr. M: Well, they have to go to school, get an education so that they know if they're given the job and they tell them something they can figure it out by themselves if there is nobody around because there anybody there all the time. *possible quote*



me: OK. On a related question, what advice could you give in general to the students of today?

That's a hard one.

Mr. M: ~~Things~~ <sup>seems</sup> like everyone is onto computers and that there is still manual labor to be done yet and a lot of instances where you gotta learn that you have to get out there and do a little bit of work once in a while.

me: O.K. Are you now or have you ever been a member of the steelworkers union?

Mr. M.: I'm still a member yeah.

me: Have you ever experienced being on strike? If so how many times?

Mr. M.: I was in different situations where strikes didn't mean that much to me, but I wasn't on strike too many times. Not that I was a scab but it just turned out that way. When the big strike was on in '46, I was in service then. And then when another one came I was a <sup>hours</sup> boss and they let us work so I got out of that one. I think I was in only one, at the most maybe a couple of them, but not very many prolonged ones.

me: Ok. How does a strike actually begin?

Mr. M.: Well, its when you can't agree on a contract. And you're negotiating for labor, wages and stuff like that.

me: How many employees does a strike usually involve?

Mr. M.: Well, it involves, You mean numbers? Well, actually I wouldn't know what the numbers are, but it's everybody that belongs to the union.

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

Mr. M.: Well, a picket line is just a show of force that you are serious about the strike that you're going for and what you think is right.

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

Mr. M: Not really, Not really. I wasn't too involved in that.

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

Mr. M: Well, he laughs I wasn't involved on the picketing in this one. When we worked we had a lot of fun. Some of those old times I had some stories and some jokes. It was pretty nice, although the others were on strike. It wasn't like now when they didn't have the benefits like they get now. Still pay and all that stuff. Not any great amount of it anyway.

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

Mr. M: Well, if they have a range meeting then they do their report on that and now they bring you up to date on what the negotiations are, and what they're going to look for, or what. Then they have recesses that they bring

up and things like that.

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

Mr. M: Well they have to have a union  
so that they have some say into  
their welfare and you can't just take  
advantage of it for the primary purpose,  
which they would and they did in the  
past.

me: Could you please describe what you  
enjoy doing in your spare time?

Mr. M: Cooking, shopping, just enjoying  
everything that's all that's it. I wouldn't  
want to work any more!

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

Mr. M.: Yes I would, as it turned out  
pension wise and things like that. Probably  
a few <sup>little</sup> minor deals. All and all it turned  
out all right as far as I'm concerned.

possible  
quote

Mrs O.K. Looking back over the years,  
what impression stand out most in  
your mind concerning your association  
with the C.I.?

Mr. M.: Well in the first place, being  
hired by them. Second one is ~~being~~  
educated to a certain extent on different  
jobs and that and it turned out real  
well. *includes*

Ms: Before we end the interview, do there  
anything else that comes to mind that  
you would like to add?

Mr. M.: There is but it wouldn't be principle  
he laughs, No there isn't. I wouldn't  
change anything or it's been nice  
~~we~~ we lived pretty well.

Ms: So that all?

(13)