

A - Amy Moffatt doing an interview with  
Mr. Frank Matthews at his home in  
Neguensee, Michigan.

Well, um, I was wondering Mr. Matthews  
if you could tell me about the mines and  
stuff. (okay)

M.M. - eh, I was born and raised in Neguensee  
at what they call the North Jackson, that  
little location went by several names, it went  
by the well location, Swede Town. And wh,  
I was born and raised on one farm there  
and lived there until I was of age and  
then I got married and I moved across  
the old street car line to another farm.  
and wh, my wife and I we were <sup>we</sup> lived  
there too much short of 30 years, and  
the mining company the Cleveland Cliff,  
who had bought out the Jackson mining  
company in 19 hundred and 5. Dose to the  
mining at the Mather ~~mine~~ <sup>and the matter B mine</sup>  
they gave us 30 days to move, so in the  
meantime we had bought a piece of  
land down here which is the corner of  
the Corello farm, ~~and~~ my wife through  
a marriage was related to the Corello's and  
we bought this corner between 41 and  
wh, and the Old Barabus Company  
on the old 41. well that's where we started  
this, wh, little museum, in 1969. But  
getting back to the early mining, eh, iron  
ore the first discovery of iron ore was

(continued)  
made in Neguane, in uh 1844 by the  
Bhirtzrae who was running a township  
line, south of Tea-a-lake which ~~is~~  
now is Tobin Street right in the city  
of Neguane. Now this group, they had  
trouble with their compass and uh,  
But Mr. Burt had ~~invented~~ <sup>perfected</sup> a solar  
compass and they finished their  
work and they went back into Jackson  
Michigan. And uh, under the guidance  
of farlo Everet, who was a business man  
there. (coughs) They formed the Jackson  
Mining Company, and in 1845 they come  
back in this area again, and they met  
up with, Chief of the Chippewa Indians,  
Margie Giezer, who lived at a summer  
home ~~on~~ the shore of Tea-a-lake.  
And he took ~~em~~ to the body of water  
one mile west of that eh, town line.  
Now theres a difference of the iron  
ore being ~~mined~~ discovered by the tool  
surveyors and the Indian chief ~~taking~~  
them to the body of water, and at  
that time it was a mountain out of  
the ground. And the Indians <sup>they</sup> didn't  
farewell because the white man beat  
them out of all their lands and every  
thing to lawsuits and everything. So,  
later on, they ah, like ~~that~~ I say the  
Jackson mine was sold out to the

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M.M. - Cleveland Cliffs in 1905, and the last  
one owner of the Jackson mine was  
Captain Sam Mitchell of NEQUANEE.  
And they were a very <sup>bi</sup>bi-recaulant  
family, when the winters were hard  
and the mines were closed they  
always saw that the people in  
this area had food, clothing and  
heating (thinks for a moment) and after  
those old time old time miner captains  
and superintendents times have  
changed, eh, in those days if anyone  
got injured (clears his throat) or killed  
at the mine ↓ instead of paying any  
compensation, they would bring the  
men that were injured to the mine  
and have them sit around to dry  
and the squires there was no such  
thing as 13 weeks vacation, you put  
in 5 or 6 days a week and ah, the  
wages were small, I know when  
I worked at the mine or at the  
mosque mine it was only \$3.28 cents  
and now today they have a machine  
doing that same type a work for  
year. and they make as much on that  
machine in one hour as we would  
make in a week. (I laugh)

A.M. - um, so, what were the mines like,  
M.M. - hmmm.  
A.M. - what were the conditions of the mine?

(Continued from page 3)

mm.-well the mines are kept I, well, I  
had a brother working at the Hartford  
~~mine~~ and eh, there was no such  
thing as safety at that time men  
were getting killed and injured right  
and left, and I had a brother  
accidentally killed at the Hartford  
mine, and I never felt as if I  
wanted to go into the mine,  
although my brothers and brother-in-  
laws, they were captains and super-  
intendants, but I worked at the  
Mosque mine for a couple <sup>out there</sup> of years  
I got partially buried up one time  
I quit, I said, you get buried up long  
enough after your dead (I laugh again) my  
brother was a captain up there, and he  
was, ah, pretty sore about it because  
I quit. ~~well~~ well they killed one brother  
& says they aint going to get me, I  
said your buried up long enough after  
your dead. (I laugh once more) I left the  
mine, and, ah, since then I've been  
jack of all trades, Butcher, Baker, Candle  
stick maker. you name it I've been  
it, I guess (He laughs, thinking back)

A.M.- Could you tell me about the open pit  
and underground mines?

4.

mim- Now, the open pits, when we lived at the farms at, ah, Jackson location, we could look across the valley and see the abandoned pits, of the Jackson Iron Company, and when the Cleveland Cliffs bought it in 1905, there was a rich body of ~~quartz~~ <sup>ore</sup> there, so ah, under the guidance of ah, S. R. Elliott, he was an ~~ore~~ <sup>ore</sup> man who worked for the Cliffs. They took out that body of ore and my dad worked there, and I remembered as a little boy carrying a dinner pail with a hot pasty and their apple pie and their tea from a short distance from the farm to the mine, and they used to ride up on a slant, it, it was only a little set up a wooden ore cars that <sup>used</sup> to run on the railroads they didn't have no ~~steel~~ <sup>steel</sup> cars at that time, and ah, those fellows at dinner time, they would ride up on the pit 60 or 70 ~~times~~ feet on ah, this little cart, and before the cart dumped the iron ore they would jump off and flat for it. and ah, they were redder than Indians.

A.M. - So, what, could you explain to me what exactly a miner is?

M.M. Hmm.

A.M. - A miner, what a miner is.

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m.m. well, Today there is so much, a man worked at the mine, you would go into the dry and change into a heavy set of clothes mostly wool clothes, and uh, well jackets, trousers, rubber boots, rubber hat, and I know at the Mosque Mine by 9:00 you were soaked and wet. You had to go in. to the <sup>up</sup> and in my time we had air hammers to drill the holes. and at the Jackson Pit you used a hammer and drill, one <sup>man</sup> had a <sup>used</sup> ~~used~~ drill on the ore body and I had the hammers. (I try to interrupt (well I)) they went down ~~the~~ <sup>200</sup> feet a day and then they blast it with nitroglycerine or blank warmer. and then if the ~~chunks~~ <sup>chunks</sup> were too heavy they had homemade hammers ~~was more than~~ <sup>over</sup> the pounds to break up the chunks so that they could handle them. and that was all hand loaded and ah, the later days of the Jackson mine they instead of having mules or horses they had a little steam power there too (he clears his throat) But later on ~~when~~ they went from the shallow <sup>open</sup> pit to the shall, shallow shaft to the deep shaft and now ~~the~~ today they are back into the great big open pits like the Empire and the Tilden, Republic, and ah, they didn't get the

iron ore so much cheaper in the open pits, there not going to bother with the underground mines, and the iron ore, and there is much iron ore under the city of Neguanez that was ever taken out its the cost of labor, and uh (clears his throat) there's, the cost of producing that ore. Now when the Mather B closed up they were down around 4,000 feet and they would take more and more in one year than all the 20 mines Neguanez had during World War I.

~~mm~~ ~~mm~~ - so how many hours did a miner work then?  
 M.M. - well, in the open pits it was a ten hour shift. they worked for a dollar a dollar and a quarter contract. ten ~~hours~~ hours. well when I worked in the Mosque mine you worked for 8 hours \$3.28 that was company pump. we took an hour to walk to work and an hour to walk back so therefore. you, and and, so most of the time you'd be going in the dark coming home in the dark you'd never see daylight or when the sun was up.

A.M. - Oh, so you said they don't days off?  
 (I repeat my question to him)  
 M.M. - Days off - if you stayed home for the day they wanted to know the reason why.

M.M. No you never got any days off.

A.M. - so.

M.M. - you had a brass check they had one in the office and you carried one. if you lost that check you had to pay a dollar. And if you couldn't produce that check to get your due bill to get that check you didn't get it until you produced the check.

A.M. - so, um, then what year did the union come in (I repeat the question twice)

M.M. - well the unions, that was back in the 1890's or in the later 1800's. They had a group come in the Russia - fins and they were radicals. they ah, they were. I don't know they figured the other guy should work and they sit by, see but it didn't work that way. and they called them the I.W.W.'s they, "I want work", and um, but then the different miners got together but they didn't fair well in the unions until the later days and after World War I. They had a parade in Ishpeming when I was a boy and one of the old gentlemen Mr. Punhale, carried the American flag. and he could never get a job at the mining company. because he carried the American flag at the end of that parade. So what he did, he went



out selling fish and groceries and he started a little store and all the men who joined the union went and traded with him so he made a pretty good living. But later on he did get a job at the Milwaukee Davis, that's a mine on the south side of Neguanne up on the hill there, on what they call Lucy Hill. And this boss is a good friend of his so he gave him a job to work on a work pot stove. And he only worked there for a couple of miners squealed on him and that that captain nearly lost his job over there. And they were ruthless

In them days some of them <sup>main</sup> mines outfits a man would get killed and, they take them and explain who ~~was~~ was and bring them home. Ain't did they . . . . .

m.m. any compensation that I remember any body getting was ah, only about 5 or 10 dollars a month (pause)

any <sup>um</sup>, so ~~where~~ were there men from different countries working together?

m.m. - Now there is a today Red necks, Beat neck and Redricks this country is on the Bump. Now when I was growing up especially after world war I, all of the different ~~internationalities~~ in our age bracket was intermarried. (9) other side →

And we were Americans its nice to respect  
your heritage But not go ~~over~~  
There were the Swedes the Cornish the English  
the Irish the Scotch the Welsh you name  
it - they were all intermingled ~~as~~ and  
we are Americans, its nice to respect  
your heritage where your folks come  
from but not go overboard it because  
this is our country here. and when  
I was coming up and when somebody  
was hurt or sick in the family everybody  
come to help. They helped you with the  
garden they helped you with cutting wood  
cutting hay, build your house build  
your barn today you hardly know  
your next door neighbor. (I laugh) Sunday  
everybody go to their church of their  
choice the family was gone and  
right after dinner they'd go visiting  
the sick. No matter who they were  
you don't see that anymore its such  
a big change.

A.M-mmmh. so, um who were the bosses then?  
M.M- well, ~~in~~ in the beginning date when  
that surveyor came up here I ~~to~~ imagine  
most of the people were British subjects  
cause your international banks were  
all over the world so by them coming  
up here and starting then, the group  
that come in were British subjects owed  
their allegiance to the King so a lot of them  
quit then and 10. started up their own setup

in this country like different lodges well, then ah, you take those, then, I'd say there were British subjects in the beginning then came in the Cornish for the mines, the Germans the French the Swedish and the Finnish didn't come in until the 1840's. They ah were the only ones of their trade the Cornish miners which you could never get a pinch from up on the ground he worked on the woods. Then the Germans they went into the Beer business and they were good black smiths and the Irish they were good blacksmiths. and they went into the railroads and the police departments and the Finnish and one of the hardest working people were the Finnish people that come out of this country here and ah went in the timber, cleared the land <sup>make their</sup> farms and the women worked just as hard as the men. And ah, they would work at the mines and they would come home and sometimes work in the dark. trying to get these little farms work.

Am. - Now (he clears his throat) could you tell me about some of the strikes and the layoffs?

M.M. - Well, they had some bad strikes here, and I remember one it was at the

the matter on, well the whole <sup>iron</sup> district  
 was tied up. and they were picketing  
 at the matter. and I wasn't connected  
 with them in any way I was  
 working for the gas company the  
 electric company and at ~~our~~  
 union helped them out <sup>as a service man</sup> and  
 they got to a point that they were  
 pretty disappointing so Paul Kobeson  
 a colored singer was going to have  
 a concert in Ashpeming and he  
 came out there, and I have some  
 of his records in my collections  
 although he's past away and he sang  
 for that group of miners and  
 that was one of the biggest uplifts  
 the union had around here. and  
 that night when he went to the  
 concert there were members of the  
 Cleveland Cliffs and other mines and  
 they boycotted that concert now that  
~~was~~ <sup>small</sup> potatoes to me and after all  
 God created all of us and we  
 should treat others as a human being  
 too. and I'll never forget that and ah,  
 he sang "Old Man River" and that  
 was really and that was really some-  
 thing. But after that strike was there  
 the ah, the feelings ~~were~~ are never there,  
 and even today well some of them

will not share <sup>pg. 13</sup> with their fellowmen they  
feel you're laid off, they want the big wages  
they want you to buy and you don't have  
it coming in you can't buy when  
you don't have anything coming in  
but ah, the mining companies <sup>just</sup> were  
greedy and hungry for production they  
got it, they unions came in <sup>and</sup>  
~~the~~ demanded and demanded and  
~~there's~~ no more iron ore. so what  
happened and everything ~~is~~ went <sup>down</sup> flat  
and the foreign countries took over  
so we helped everyone of them foreign  
countries then they turn around and  
stab us in the back. Well, it's the  
International Banks ~~to~~ that are to blame  
you know you have to have capital  
to run it, ~~But~~ when they go to work  
and things are made over there  
and men that work over ~~here~~ <sup>in</sup> this  
country and bring foreign products in  
the union men buy a foreign car  
and then go and ah, close down  
their own factory it doesn't make  
sense (we both laugh) Now if they had  
supply in demand the free enterprise  
~~has~~ it of course, and, one of the big  
troubles today isn't the free enterprise  
it is the abuse of free enterprise  
privileges we have in this country.

cont.) you can give some of them people you can give them everything and they still demand more. But if you can't pay out more than pay coming in you just can't do it, you can't run your home like that. A lot of them say to me well look what you got. My wife and I worked all our lives to get what we got, some days for a dollar a day and some days nothing; only working home to try to better what you have. And here some of them fellows are making as much as an hour as I was making in a week sometimes. (I go on) (he laughs) But the unions the unions have to come down and ah, the mining companies getting too much machinery - over-production, and when you get over-production, they're gonna lay off there not going to run it. But things are stored away and not being sold (hm)

A.M. so, now could you tell me about the pasties and?

mm - Paster. There are more controversies over pasties than enough. The Cornish people did not make the first pasties. If you read Middleable history when the knights went out on these crusades they took pasties with them and were the covering of meat, solum, fish whatever they had berries, cherries made into a pasty. As it went.

through the European countries up through France, Germany into Scandinavian countries they all made ~~it~~ <sup>pastries</sup> a little different when they got over to England the Cornish people made a pasty whatever they could get, fish or plough or meat, and so on. Now when the potato famine hit the British isle and the Irish and all <sup>em</sup> start migrating to this country for the mines the copper mines and the iron mines when they a better living they made a better food, see. So and when you make a pasty ~~its~~ gotta be made a Cornish <sup>according</sup> the way the Cornish make it, suet, flank steak, onions, potatoes and ruga ~~uh~~ rutabaga, not turnip its gotta be rutabaga and probably a little parsley if you like it. But each nationality today make a pasty according to their own likin'. But when you take and grind up like potato sausage that's no pasty you spoil good food. It's improvement live, gotten into more arguments ~~if~~ you probably have seen it <sup>it</sup> on channel six. a young lady <sup>showing</sup> it on channel a tape recording and uh, TV. picture ~~of~~ me eating a Cornish pasty and they showed when we worked out in the winter time and our sandwiches would be cold ~~it~~ like when we working at the airport.

we take and <sup>put</sup> them on a shovel  
over a fire to thaw them out so we  
could eat them. But in those days  
when those miners had their party for  
lunch they put it on a fire and  
warmed it up. But the people got  
the biggest kick out of that about eating  
their party ~~over~~ a dirty shovel. (clears his  
throat) but that's not the way at all  
it was just hard. But pasties are the  
best pasties are made at home you  
make them according to your tükín?



History beginning  
Indian

Property ownership  
mention CCF

Conditions

wages (what)  
what was like  
lunch box

Unions