

Jessica Vault

interview with John Meier

10/06



me: Hi, my name is Jessica Vault, I am interviewing John Meier, for about mining and were up in the school's cafeteria.

me: So, when and where were you born?

Mr. M.: I was born in 1940, June 14, in Flint, Michigan.

me: What are the names of your parents?

Mr. M.: My parents are Donna and Harold Meier.

me: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. M.: My mother was a homemaker, she raised four children. Dad was a personnel Director for a manufacturing company down in Lower Michigan.

me: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. M.: Yes, I have one brother and two sisters.

me: What are their names?

Mr. M.: My brother is Mike he is the baby in the family, and my two sisters are Mary and Beth.

me: Ok, are you married?

Mr. M.: I am married, my wife is Sheila.

me: Ok, how many years have you been married?

Mr. M.: Six.

Me: what are the names of your children?

Mr. M: I have five children total. and, the oldest is John, Next, is Kaye, Then amy, and I have two babies at home now Jennie and Paul.

me: are they twins?

Mr. M: No, Jennie is three years old and Paul is two.

me: O.k. Hum, How long have you been working and what do you do?

Mr. M: I am director of Environmental ~~ES~~ Affairs for ClISS a dozen times.

me: So, how long have you been working there?

Mr. M: I have been working for ClISS since 1970, with a few years off, which we'll talk about later. and the present job for four years.

me: Hum, so, why did you choose to work Hum... for mining

Mr. M: For ClISS, the mining company, well I started to work on a project ~~at~~ the republic mining while I was still a student at Michigan Tech. I was in the graduate program, doing a project on the tailing basin and got down to republic a

includes
& great

Mr. M: Few times, and it look like a pretty
con: exciting interesting place to work
and in the Ironing Industry, so when
I was about to graduate I contacted
Cliss and there after I went to
work.

me: Have you any relatives that worked
in Cliss?

Mr. M: No, I'm the only one.

me: Ok.

Mr. M: I'm the first one.

me: Do you want your sons and daughts
to work there?

Mr. M: Ya, I (Then the bell interrupted us)

me: Thats the bell

Mr. M: The older children are out of the
area, but certainly, if they came back
to the area encourage them to work at
Cliss.

me: Ok., Hum, What other mines, have you
worked in any other mines?

Mr. M: Outside of Cliss or inside of Cliss.

me: Both?

Mr. M: Ok, outside of Cliss I worked
in Colorado for a short time in the
oilfield.

Mr. M: When I been with Cliffs I worked
in all the property's the Tilden, Empire,
Republic, Humboldt, Pioneer Ore
Improvement Plant, and many of the
phacility's that are not active any
more.

Include

me: Hum, Over the years what duties
did you perform?

Mr. M: When I started in 1970, I was
working as a project engineer, and
had mostly new construction. My first
contstruction was the construction of
the Green wood Reservoir, on the
Esconaba River. and then I was involve with
building dams and roads and pipe lines, and
water wells and that sort of thing.

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me: Out of those witch ones have been the
most dangerous?

Mr. M: Oh, (Then Mrs. Hebert comes in says
sorry and goes out)

Mr. M: None of them have been particularly
dangerous. In ^{Inherently} ~~hearently~~ Stay out of the
way of big equipment, is always
~~what's~~ something everyone has to
do. The jobs I have, have not
been particularly dangerous. Right
now my job is relative to the
office, primerealy into enviromental

Mr. M: law work.
cont.

me: Hum (bell rings)

me: What are the duties of your job right now?

Mr. M: My job right now is director of environmental affairs, is to keep up to date on all environmental laws both Federal and state and make sure that all of our facilities and the people of our facilities are in compliance with the environmental laws, have the right permits and do what they are suppose to do. Good housekeeping environmentally.

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me: OK, Do you have to have any education for this job?

Mr. M: The job I have now, requires a lot of agreement. In 1983 I left Cliffs and went to law school and graduated and was lucky enough to come back. Back to Cliffs I didn't know that at the time, when I left, that I would be coming back, but it worked to my advantage and the previous jobs I have

Mr. M : as project engineer required a ~~masters~~ ^{basters} degree with I got from Michigan Tech.

me : Hum, How about your other jobs when you first started did you need any job training for that?

Mr. M : Those jobs when I first ~~started~~ ^{started} with Cliffs need a basters degree in engineering and my degree I have a ~~basters~~ and a masters in vicifilance engineering, which is dirt work, and buildings and roads and pipe lines, and that sort of thing.

me : Hum, did the jobs require any well Hum did you use any machinery or equipment?

Mr. M : The jobs that I have had had't require any use of any special the use of machinery, we've had some special machinery on the job like building the Greenwood Reservoir require alot of big equipment, but I didn't operate any. And right now law books are my special machinery. They are boring but.

me : what happens if something isn't aloud and if you don't catch it?

Mr. M: Hum, there are penatiles, for enviromental law, just like for other laws. Like if you goto fast on the high way, you get a ~~ticket~~ ticket and you pay a fine. And it is the same way with enviromental laws, hum, if you don't have a permate and you should have a permate, hum, you'll get a ticket and pay a fine and maybe spend some time in jail, alot more industrial people are spending time in jail, than those case a few years ago.

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me : Has anything like that happened?

Mr. M: Hum, Nobodys gone to jail, in Cliffs, and we have gotten some tickets a couple not very many, were doing a pretty good job. So, we don't get into treble.

me : Hum, Are there other people that share this job with you?

Mr. M: I have a counter part over in minnnesota, that does the same thing. That I do over there that I do in Michigan. Ha

Mr. M: has two active mines, that he provides
some environmental law servuacies to, and
then here in michigan I have someone
who works with me in Ishpeming.
There, also, one person in each Empire
and Tilden, that does about the same
certain thing.

me: Ok., Hum, what is the most difficult
part of your job?

Mr. M: The most difficult part of the job
I have right know is, reading all
of the laws and the cambers of the
laws, and keeping up to date with the
specifics of the law are, they are
changing so, often, and so much of the
law are changing that its a chellange
to keep up to date.

me: Hum, what have you enjoyed the
most about your job?

Mr. M: Totally since I been in cliffs the
diversity or difference in varisy tasks
and jobs that I've had. Theres never
a time when its repetative and doing
the same thing over, theres some thing
different all the time, and I think

Mr. M : that's the advantage in an industry
like mining, so many things
going on working pites, and plants,
tailing disposal, and water supply,
and all of them are just a
little different. The diversity is
something new most everywhere.

me : So, is that why you stayed with
the mine all those years is the
diversity?

Mr. M : I think it is ya, ya, it's exciting
and good people, too.

me : Hum, what are the biggest responceability?

Mr. M : The biggest responceability are making
sure that the Cliffs Sateclities, are
Cliffs are ^{compliant} compliant with the law, and
that the Cliffs managers do the best
they can and knew what the ~~laws~~ ^{laws}
~~required to do~~ are and they are
required to do. To comply with those
enoiromental laws.

me : Hum, have you been involed or witness
any accidents?

9.

Mr. M.: No, unforchantly not.

me : Hum, have you ever been in a humorous situations?

Mr. M.: Hum, there are humorous situations every day, but I don't think I recall anything thing that particully stands out, ~~but~~ There was one very unajue situation that I incountered almost 20 years ago (now). When we were constructing the tailing basin for Tilden. over south east for Palmarc. The scrapers exculated the big pit for sand and gravel for the dam, or dike. And the scrapers have down about ten feet in the ground as they started to cut off trees there was a log sticking up out of, the top of the log sticking up out of the sand. it went a little deeper and cut it off again, and it was in such a strange place normally a tree grows on top of the ground, and grows up, but we were down ten or 15 feet below the below the ground the normal ground, out there sands plain where we were cutting off these trees, so we (infestigated) Those trees grew before the last glacier, witch was about 10 or 11 thoudsand years ago, so that was very interesting and alot of fun digging out samples of trees, there was about an acre of trees either

include

Mr. M : Black Spruce or Tamarack and that was
cont. pretty interesting.

me : Hum, Do you want to describe the
working conditions?

Mr. M : Well, my working conditions are
pretty comfortable, I work in a office
most of the time. Occasionally I get
to the mines out in the plants or pits.
and thats a real treat for me. Most
of the time I'm in the office, I have
a big book case of a lot of law books,
and state laws and environmental laws
also federal laws, that I look at everyday
so, I'm got a soft conditions with
everything else.

me : Hum, Have your safty standards changed
or improved?

Mr. M : Yes, I'm directly invole involed with
safty, and don't have alot of things
to comply with in my office, but
the safty standards have desinatly
have changed over the years, and
certainly for the better for all
employs, to protect workers and
I inspect that that will continue
The same as the environmental laws

include

Mr. M
cont.

° have gotten strict and safety laws have come
more strict and that's better for all of
us because families don't there^{husband, wife or} sother to
be injured on a job. It's all for the
better. It's a loss for class if a worker
gets injured.

me ° Hum, what are like some of the safety
standards that have been change?

Mr. M ° Training is one of the biggest things, workers
are required to training on general safety
standards. ^{safety glasses} handling dangerous equipment, dangerous
tools and safety shoes are required. Making sure
that if an employ is working on a
dangerous equipment that that equipment is
locked out a padlock is put on the controls
so nobody can accidentally start it. So, if
I have my arm on the machinery or if
one of my friends working on the
machinery.

include

me ° Has, like before you have the padlock
has anyone gotten hurt?

Mr. M ° I don't really know about anyone in
our facilities I don't know the details
of that but certainly in the country, a lot
of people have gotten ~~hurt~~^{injured} by that.

me ° So, Hum, Hum Have your duties and jobs
changed over the years?

Mr. M: Duties have changed. For several reasons
one of the reasons is that we've been
involved with Cliffs on different projects
when I came to Cliffs the Filden was
just in the planning stage and I was involved
with the construction of the Filden mine,
and expansions after that, and the
expansions of the Empire. Those jobs
just change naturally over the years
I got a couple different jobs since
I been with Cliffs, I was in charge
in the engineering, when I was in charge
of the engineering part I was working
with a lot of different types of engineer
ing electrical and mechanical and involved with
many different types. And then this
new job, environmental affairs is entirely
different, definitely.

Michelle

me: What do you mean by different?

Mr. M: Hum, when I was in engineering
I was involved with planning things
and supervising construction out in
the field. Hum, when I was building
the Greenwood Reservoir I was in the
field all day ~~and~~ ~~working~~ with the

Mr. M: workers, and making sure they knew what needed
to be done. That was Sun. This is a big
change sitting in the office pouring over
paper all the time.

me: So, you prefer working out instead of in
the office, reading?

Mr. M: That's my first choice however times
change and people change and this was a
new responsibility and something I wanted
to do and when I went to law
school I pretty much knew that what
was going to happen and I wasn't going
to spend a whole lot of time out doors!
(I chuckled) and the plant.

me: Hum, what are your best co-workers?

Mr. M: Well, everybody we work with is at Cliss's
because they want to be there it's not
like it's peticularly different than in a street
or in the big city the way I think of
it. We live here in the U.P. because
we like it. We like it up here. It's kind of
interesting. If you like you stay here. I sound
the people are hard workers in this industry
I worked other places to and numerous and
ambichus and other things. And there are a
few people I worked with that probly stand out above
the rest. When I came to Cliss's, Bob DeGobrielle
was Chief Engineer he was a real not a slow driver
but he demanded a lot but he was
really fair. He was a special kind of guy
I learned a lot from him about work
and construction. And about life. Hum
another fellow that that probly everyone

Mr. M: remembers that we worked with him was
con't Robbie Spencer and he was an old timer
who was like an grandfather to all the
young kids that came out of collage. He
would work up in the copper mine up
in calament for many, many years.
He was pretty old when I first
met him. He took us on our first
lane and teach us new things
about engineering and construction
And then finally he got pretty
old and retired and unforchently
past away.

me: so, everybody liked him?

Mr. M: Everybody liked him, Yeah, Yeah
he was friendly to everybody,

me: Do you remember any special stories
that stand out about him?

Mr. M: Oh, there are some special stories,
He wore one of those old time
mining hats. Right now we have
a hat that a little bit of a hill
on the front. But Robbie had a
hat that had a big wide brim
all around it that had a place for
an old miners lamp that he used
underground up in the copper mines

Mr. M: off chance we don't use those any more
can't because they don't work underground anymore
And if Robbie was ever late he would
tell use he was checking the pipes
all morning. That was sort of a joke
with Robbie

me: Yeah, Hum, Have you been in any
special projects?

Mr. M: Hum, Yeah unforchently most of
my work in Cliffs was special
projects. Hum, being part of
constuction at Tilden Mine was
real special to everybody because
it was a new oppertunity to the
people in Marquette County certainly
an oppertunity for me involle with
the construction of such a major
project and many of the other
project the same way. So,
Sort of a special project was at
least I fell my involment and
development of New Enviromental
lains here in Michigan and knowing
and understanding that enviromental
laws are changing at a rappid pace

include
+ quote

Mr. M: We put a real emphasis on learning those environmental laws and teaching employees education them so that the things they did on their jobs were environmentally sound.

Me: Hum, Have you been in any new programs?

Mr. M: Ho, this new environmental essays is what could be called a new program. We've done a lot of training of employees and from time to time I go to the mines and talk about environmental laws and what we can do and need to do, to better keep this area environmentally clean.

include

Me: Hum, Have you ever won awards or been recognized?

Mr. M: I don't remember anything that I even gotten formal, No.

Me: Hum, at a time have you ever felt like changing jobs, to something else?

Mr. M: Mm hum, I did that in 1983 I hum, things were a little bit slow with the economic down turn I don't know I just, there weren't many

He.

Mr. M:
con't

projects, and I became interested
in the law so I quit and left
classes and moved to Lansing and
went to law school it was a
pretty big change for me, and
I was 43 when I did that

include

but, I when I was in law
school I worked for the department
of natural resources, in Lansing
and so I learned some new things
about environmental law and programs
and and then ^{or fortunately} ~~un~~fortunately I was
able to come back to classes
to the upper Peninsula

Me: Like do you recommend like trucks
like is a new truck was being
built do you have to see is it
is ok?

Mr. M: Hum, No, I don't do anything
with that in environmental
consideration with trucks. From
time to time we exshionmissions
like specification on a truck we
don't do that. Hum, the things
that I do with environmental

Mr. M^o
com't

law are making sure that our water discharge in streams are as clean and we have a permit and are complying with all parts of the permit and doing the proper testing and getting the proper results to comply with the permit and the same with air we have air discharge permit every plant we have has a stack there are certain conditions we have in order to be compliance and we have waste materials just like everybody does at home people at home have paint and we have print at the mines that needs proper disposal sometimes regular land fill and maybe special land fill that this material might have some special characteristic

Mc Ghee
K. G. Gable

me: Hum, what do you think the future holds for the Tilden or the Empire?

Mr. M^o: well, I think it is good. The Tilden and Empire and other people that work for cliffs in this area have done a lot of real hard work over years and I think it is important that all of us need to work

Mr. M: just as hard as we can to continue to keep
the cost down to a minimum and to keep
the quality of our product as high as
we can at the demands of our customers
on the steel manufactures. There is
alot of iron ore in this country and
if we don't do that the cost down,
and the product quality, will our
customers will buy from someone
else so I think it looks good. We've
done a good job and all the workers
have worked hard to accomplish this
so I think it is good.

include

Me: Hum, If it was or if you felt it was
going to go down hill would you
take a new career?

Mr. M: Hum, I don't know it depends on
the timing if my job would be
eliminated, hum, I probably wouldn't
take a different career I have
a good background in engineering
and environmental laws I probably
stay in that. I certainly wouldn't
want to move to the city I like
to stay up here but if I could
do that I don't know. But I

Mr. M: look further with things to work if
things turn bad and don't turn out like
I. ~~inside~~ ^{is he a lawyer?}

me: Hum, why do you like it up here so
much?

Mr. M: That is a interesting question from a
young person and my kids always ask that. The
pace of living is really attractive. Living in

Lansing it was traffic, traffic, traffic and
there was so many people. up here there
not much traffic and you don't have
to worry about getting in a traffic jam. The
people are all good people certainly for
the most part. I like the outdoors. I
like to be able to go in the woods.
I have a small farm and sometimes
those winters get a little long. But even
through summers are the best time of the
year. March you get ready for spring.

The rest of the year is so nice. Those
are the main reasons I like it.

me: Ok, Hum, what do you think the future
looks like for the iron mining industry

Mr. M: well certainly the demand for iron is
still going to continue, it is a major
product in the world market the demands
are changing a little bit. Perhaps the
demand for conventional pellet we make
do.

Mr. M:
con't

at Empire and Tilden might not get a whole lot better than it is now and I'm not an expert but I'm a layman and this is my opinion. Then, the electric furnaces or the mini mills are getting a little higher where as the steel industry or steel demand right now so mostly those mini mills use scrap and we recently ^{advised} had a project out at the Republic mine where it closed down about 6 years ago that we would like to reopen the Republic mine and produce an iron briquettes which would be a seed for these mini mills and if this works out then the many issues that still are standing then we are hoping we can get a little piece of the mini mills actions and these briquettes that we might be able to produce would be a high quality seed for those mini mills so I think those are the type of things that the whole iron and steel industry needs to do. We need to look at the demand worldwide. We are on a worldwide economy now and do the best we can to meet those demands. We have to be flexible and keep cost down and

Mr. M: quality up just like in these first
con't operations.

Me: Hum, How long do you think it will take
before they approve for use to go to the
the?..

Mr. M: Republic

Me: Yeah Republic.

Mr. M: Hum, I don't really know. I am hoping
within that again this is not anything
from Cliff's, its from my own opinion.
I am hoping within a few months from
now. and will cost alot of money to
develop this new concepts and needs
to get a few partners from the bank.
It would be nice to have that
dision made within a few monthes.

Me: Hum, what if they turn it down what
do you think will happen?

Mr. M: If it doesn't go then, Hum, we'll just
have to another partners or other
uses for Republic or perhaps it will
be permantly close. We haven't done
that within the twelve years it has
been active and we don't want to
do that. But we may be force to
do that. Hopefully not.

Me: Hum, For CCI to remain competitive you must keep the price low and the quality high right?

Mr. M: Right that's the key.

Me: OK. Hum, Why do you think other companies have failed?

Mr. M: Cliff's is done a lot of things over its total existence its started in the late 1800's and one of the first things we did was back in that time was they bought alot of land. Thousands and Thousands of acres through out the upper Pennisula much of that is in Marquette county. Perhaps other companies didn't do that now when the Tilden was plan in the 60's and 70's we had this one body out there and it belonged to Cliff's and that was a big factor in making the Tilden a bio project. and then through out the years the Cliff's people have been leaders in developing new processing to keep the quality of the pellet high and the cost down. And we just like to think

1/4 Cliff's & quote

m: we did a little bit better job than some of the other people over the years and keep on doing that and we need to continue doing that

me: Hum, How do you think history will look at Cleveland Cliffs iron mining company and its workers?

Mr. m: I think the history will regard the Cliffs and its workers as hard workers ambitious, people with a vision who work hard to make that vision come true. Buying the land over 100, 30, 40 years ago, developing the pellet processing, for the whole great world were they hydrate the South the underground lines now hum, the steam process at Republic works and goes that will be another that will be another thing that will be directed use of iron project on a commercial basis in that sort of thing Cliffs is the leader right now in the United States and the biggest iron producer hum, I think those didn't come by chance theres alot of good people up here perhaps (The tape stopped!)

include

excellent info
emphasize
the environmental

me: Will you remember?

Mr. m: yes, certainly there will be something to remember that will stand out about the others
Mr. mothers is one of the sounders of Cliss,
and you know there is the Mather mine, Mather Inn,
and Mather avenue. And those such things
It's the workers, the people that actually do
the work they are a big part of success
of the leaders

me: Mum, what do young people have to skill,
what kind of skills do young people have
to do, to work in CI?

Mr. m: As with most other good paying jobs, young
people have to know how to do something, to
learn a trade. Mum, and that doesn't mean
going to collage, But it probably means some
school after High school. Trade school collage,
university, but continue to work hard and learning
to do something, that can be applied in
industry or foreign employers such as Cleveland
Cliss there just ain't many general labor jobs
today like there were 20 or 30 years ago. and
it is very difficult for a young, high school
graduant to work at Cliss's now day learn
something stay in school.

me: Mum, what is the youngest person you ever
had working for Cliss's that you can remember?

Mr. M: I expect around 10 but many, many years ago it might of been much younger than that, but I really don't know.

Me: What year did you start, I mean how old were you when you started?

Mr. M: I was, I started in 1920 when I got out of collage, I was 30, I spent some time in the military while I was going collage so I was a little bit older. I was 30 years old when I came to Cliffs.

Me: Hum, what is like the oldest person you can remember working there?

Mr. M: Well, my dear friend Robbie Spencer was in his late 60's when he finally retired I think he was 67 or 68. That the oldest I can remember.

Me: Hum, Robbie Spencer was the one you were telling me about was called Grandpa right?

Mr. M: Hu! Ha, Yeah

Me: Ok., I was just checking.

Mr. M: Hum, what advise would you give to students today?

Mr. M: Stay in school! Work hard! Do your lessons and don't try skate by those good grades in school will give you

Mr. M: scholar ships if you want to go to collage.
con't and when you get out go' to collage try
to learn something that's valuable don't
just try to get through. But do
your best. And desinatly will pay
off if you have a vision or a
goal or some though of something
that you young people want to do
individually go for it. Huh, there's nothing
out of reach for ambitious young
litherants and you can do it.

me: Hum, Have you ever worked on the union, in
the union?

Mr. M: No.

me: Are you in the union?

Mr. M: No I'm not in the union and I have not
worked in the union.

me: a.k. Hum, what do you enjoy doing the
best in your spare time?

Mr. M: I enjoy being with Sheila and the two
children. And we have a few animals
at our place and Highland cattle, a
team of Belgian horses, some chickens
and a goose, a couple dogs. since we
have a lot of chores to do there

Mr. M: and we have children they like to
cont collect eggs and feed the cattle and
that's been my hobby pretty much for
the last 3 or 4 years. Build a farm
actually sundown school, too. Fourth grade
is a challenge, but I'm good at it.

Me: Hum, Hum, If you had to do it all
over would you had to do it all
over would you go for CCI?

Mr. M: Huhu, Yeah, Certainly I would that's a
tough question to ask anybody that's as
old as I am because you learn a lot and
got a lot of experience over the years
and you know a lot more now than
you did, or I think I do now than I
did 25 year ago but I would say
yes. It's been a good place to work
for a career a lot of interesting things, learn
a lot.

Me: Hum, Thinking back when you were a
child did you think that having any
other career choice besides mining?

Mr. M: Hum, yes I wanted to be a doctor, but
I didn't do quite well enough at
college to get into medical school. I
didn't do very well on the entrance
exam so I, someone else rule that
out for me. And I wanted to be

Mr. M: Many things that many young people
can't wanted to be some time to time. But
since high school I pretty much wanted
to be an engineer. I applied in the
navy for a few years that was a
little diversion for a few years before
I got settled down. I knew exactly what
I wanted to be, but I am probably doing
what I am best suited for, and
what I really wanted to do.

me: Hum, what impressions stand out the most
about mining, concerning with and associated
with CCI?

Mr. M: I think the good people and I really
mean the good people. It takes good
people to do a really good job. And
that's one thing that I believe CCI is
made up of. In the Ishpeming, Agnew
and Marquette County, predominantly
really good people and you see their
work and you observe activities and when
you are in church, and other activities
and I think that, that's probably the
reason it stands out the best, the
most in my life, the good people
associated with CCI.

Me: Hum, would you like to add anything?

Mr. M: Well I think congratulations to the teachers and students here at National Mine school who believe in this project I don't have much to say about my job and my career at Cliff's but I think you are doing a terrific job and a special congratulations to you, you have done a good job Jessica!

Me: Oh,

Mr. M: You done a really good job.

Me: Oh, thanks for coming.

Mr. M: If I can be in any assistance give me a call I'll give you my card and my telephone number is on there if you like to come by the office some time and see the mess of paper I have sitting you can bring your friends along.

Me: Hum, Thanks.

Mr. M: O.k. Thank you.

1.) Sasty ~~and~~ ^{dangerous} - pink

2.) Job duties ^{analytical job} - blue

3.) schooling / training - green

4.) Future - purple

5.) Good things and bad things of running

5.) Family / co-workers - orange

6.) what has change

8.) why stay with CLISS

9.) why CLISS stayed as a running company - yellow

orange - family
green
blue
orange co-workers
pink
green
yellow
purple