

Sarah Harnett's
interview with ~~the~~
Morris 'Parde' Carlson

me: My name is Sarah Harnett and I'm doing
my Red Dust interview w/ Morris Carlson

Mr.C: Senior

me: Senior, ok when were you born?

Mr.C: I was born September the 30th 1921

me: and where were you born?

Mr.C: In Detroit Michigan, Harlow Hospital

me: o.k., what are the names of your parents?

Mr.C: My father was Eugene Carlson + my mother

~~was~~ ^{was} Bertha Carlson.

me: o.k. what did your parents do for a living?

Mr.C: My father was a miner - my mother was

a housewife

me: Oh, what were the names of your brothers

and sisters?

Mr.C: None, don't have any (aunts)

me: um, are you currently, well, you're married,

so what's your spouse's name?

Mr.C: Jeannette

me: and what are the names of your children?

Mr.C: Well, we got Marlene, Morris Junior, Steven,

Carolyn, Tom, Barbara, and John.

me: ok.

Mr.C: seven of them

me: and you have lots of grandkids to, right?

Mr.C: 17 grand children

me: wow, o.k., how long did you work in the mines?

Mr.C: 34 yrs.

me: ~~ok~~ ok, why did you choose in the iron industry?

Mr. C: Well, when I was young, everybody that had a Dad that worked in the mine, you practically knew you had a job in the mine, and that was the highest pay at that time.

include + quote part

me: O.k. Did you have - or, your dad worked at the mine, was there anyone else that worked there?

Mr. C: 2 grandfathers

me: Oh, wow so -

Mr. C: one had 50 yrs, at one mine, just the Cliff Shaft mine. He worked 50 yrs at the same mine.

include

me: Really?

Mr. C: Mhmm.

me: What are the names of various mines or buildings you've worked in?

Mr. C: Well, I started in the Moss Mine 1940, come out, then I enlisted in the United States Navy, ~~and then~~, and when I came home I went to the Mather A. From the Mather A to the Mather B, and from the Mather B to the Empire. And that's where I retired from. 21 yrs. ago.

include

me: O.k., over the years, what kind of duties did you have at the mines.

Mr. C: well, I ~~1st~~ started ~~at~~ I was a miner, I was part-time w/ my dad underground and we were miners.

include + quote

me: Mhmm

Mr. C: And, when I come out of the service, I went to the Mather A Mine, I was also a miner there, and then I went to the Mather B mine, I worked on service there + operated heavy equipment, and that's what I've done for the whole rest of the

MRC (cont'd): time swaked, ~~the~~

me: what kind of equipment did you use?

MRC: Bulldozers, shovels, cranes, graders, everything

me: Did you wear like hardhats & ~~stuff like that?~~

MRC: Well, at 12 you didn't need a hardhat I don't know when that came in. you always had to have safety glasses, but you never had to have a hard hat. Only under ground.

me: ok, did any of your jobs require special training?

MRC: Well, ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~good~~ ~~heavy~~ ~~equipment~~ ~~operator~~ ~~you~~ ~~it~~ ~~took~~ ~~along~~ ~~time~~ ~~to~~ ~~learn~~ ~~and~~ ~~you~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~ ~~very~~ ~~careful~~, that was the most important part.

me: Mhmm

MRC: was to work safely.

me: yeah, ok what was the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

MRC: That's a tough one

-Laugh-
MRC: well, when I was a ~~miner~~ ~~miner~~ ~~underground~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~, ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~lucky~~ ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~working~~ ~~at~~ ~~my~~ ~~dad~~ ~~but~~, ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~ ~~learn~~ ~~how~~ ~~to~~ ~~blast~~ ~~and~~, ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~all~~ ~~those~~ ~~things~~ ~~you~~ ~~had~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~very~~ ~~careful~~,

me: yeah
MRC: Mhmm, & where to drill the holes in the right place & everything like that

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

MRC: hmm, (pause) well, I'm trying to think, I guess working underground was the most difficult thing I did, cause if on surface it was easier.

me: Mhmm, Did you wear like a candle or light on your helmet?

Mr. C: We had to wear lights. We had a battery that we had on our belt & a, we use to pick up the battery in the morning before you went underground you had a place on your miner's helmet that you wore & that you weighed it think that battery weighed 5 lbs.

me. Really?

Mr. C: Yeah, it was kinda heavy to be on your belt all day.

me: yeah, I bet, what was the, your biggest responsibilities of your job?

Mr. C: Well, I was a heavy equipment operator, I had to be careful for all the trucks I loaded when I was a shovel operator at the Empire I always had to keep my eyes out, watch machines if you were making ^{include}

me: Mhmm

Mr. C: Specially if you were moving some of those big shovels

me: yeah, ~~over~~ over the years, what did you enjoy most about your job?

Mr. C: I would say quitting (laugh) But ^{opening quote} working w/ all the fellows, years ago it was just like a big family, you hated to stay home from work because you were afraid you were going to miss something. But it was enjoyable part of it. the men that was the most enjoyed part

me: Did you work in crews w/ a bunch of men, or

Mr. C: Well, we did when we were working in service, like at the Empire mine those were 3 different crews. But in underground, you had the some partners all the time.

(4)

me: ok. If you can think of something, describe the most dangerous situations that you were in.

include
Mr. C: Well, one time when my dad + I came into the place where we worked, the other shift had blasted. And we scraped all of the ore out, and we were going to put up timber and I had a pick + I was picking to make a hitch for the timber. And there was dynamite in there that didn't explode, + the shift before us didn't report it didn't go off. And I picked into a blasting cap, up the sticks of dynamite + if that would've went off, I would've been peices. That would've been about it, but that's about the most dangerous thing I can think of.

me: Ok. Have you been involved or have you witnessed any accidents?

Mr. C: Well, I worked at the mine they had a couple of bad cave-ins where men were buried up for 6-8 hours

me: Really?

include
Mr. C: yeah, but they got 'em out, and a (cough) they had the doctor come right under-ground, the C.T. Doctor was Dr. Mudge + he had to come right underground + you use to have to climb up to the work place like maybe 160-200 feet but the doctor was up there when they - they had a couple of these guys who was only 208 them in there but 105 'em should say, they had to cut the hair of his head.

me: Really?

M.R.C.: When he was caught between timbers in
order to pull him out that's about the
most - at worst accident I've seen,

me: Or could you describe ~~it~~ either
the most unique or perhaps the most humorous
situation you've seen over the years?

M.R.C.: Well, everyday was humorous (laughs) when
ya, when you worked underground, I remember when
I worked at the Moss Mine, we had a fella from
Marquette who's - that his wife & him was going
to have a baby. And as you know, in the old mines
well, everything was so old & remote, well we
needed a baby chair ~~at~~ the mine, for the guy
in underground. (laughs) They had diapers, and
booties and everything you can think of right
down in underground, so we had a shower for
a guy once.

include

me: That sounds like fun.

M.R.C.: Yeah

me: Describe your working conditions

M.R.C.: Well, the cat was always a good place to work because
they wanted you to work safely & when I worked
underground if you had a new place, they called
the place where you worked your piece well,
your timber was a high but as you stayed in
that sub that you were on everything kept dropping
down. So lots of times towards the ends of that
Scrip you were ~~going~~ going to finish, you were
crawling on your hands & knees.

include

me: Oh

M.R.C.: Special, but ~~not~~ by the raise. But, it was
always good safety first.

me: Was there still certain standards to keep it clean
and stuff like that?

MRC: Yeah, you always had to keep your work
place clean, keep the tools sharp.

me: OK. How have the safety standards changed, &
what improvements do you see are yet to
be made?

MRC: Well, now they have — year ago they never
had the safety classes that they got now,

me: Mhmm

include
MRC: In recent years they've been able to go
out to the "mother A" out here where they
had safety meetings & you learned like how
to put on a mask so you could breathe
in case of fire & different things. I can't
remember having that (don't know) was 53
years ago when I started, they never had nothing
like that then.

me: Mhmm

MRC: So it's improved — I don't know — there doing
an excellent job now

me: Yeah describe what your coworkers were like,
do you remember any stories that stand out
about them?

include
MRC: Well, the older guys, there was some of
them, they were excellent miners. They were about
the best that, you'd want to try to live up to
their name, you know. After you worked there
for many years, you'd ~~to~~ catch on like
they had to catch on, and just be, ~~be~~
hope that you could be as the people that
went before you.

me: Yeah

me: Did you tell stories + stuff while you were working?

MRC: ~~One~~ yeah always had stories to tell. (laugh)

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

MRC: Well, the only ~~new~~ new project I was, a, in, was when they were going to start the Empire mine. That was in 1960, and I was the first one to go down to the Empire mine, it was all just woods down there, and I had a crane and a bulldozer. They had blasted a hole + I had to load some small trucks + they hauled that to the, they called it they pilot plant and that's where they run all the tests to see if they could make a magnetic pallet w/ the ore they had. So I was the first one there w/ a crane + a bulldozer.

me: wow, that's kind of interesting!

MRC: yeah

me: To be the first one, have you ever won any awards or have been recognized in any way for your job performance?

MRC: No, I don't ~~think~~ think so.

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

MRC: Well, the thing I kinda kicked myself for, was that I didn't stay in the Navy. I loved the navy, and I was in the boiler room + the engineering department. I really enjoyed that.

Mr. C (Continued): That's the only other thing that
of would've sided better than work,

me: How long were you in the Navy?

Mr. C: Almost 4 years.

me: Really?

Mr. C: World War II

me: Oh, did you go over seas or anything?

Mr. C: Yes, Atlantic Pacific, my ship was sunk in
the East China Sea.

me: Really?

Mr. C: Yes, May the 28th and over
half of the crew went down w/ the ship,

me: Oh

Mr. C: So, I was very lucky, coming from a
fire room 40 feet below decks to even
get off the ship before it went down.

me: Yeah

Mr. C: Mhmm

me: That's pretty interesting!

Mr. C: That was the USS Drexler & we still
have remnants!

me: Oh! That's —

Mr. C: Once a year

(LOOK at
article!)

ME: How many guys survived from that?

MRC: Well it was, I think there was about ~~300~~ 300, 300 or 400 people, 386 guys on the ship, and, I think there was a little less than half of us that got off ~~the ship~~ of it.

me: wow!

MRC: But we got about 100 survivors they've found through the years, so, we have a ^{meeting} ~~meeting~~, a reunion once a year, some years I go, and some years I don't.

me: That sounds pretty neat, um, what do you think the future holds for the Tilden Empire?

MRC: Well, w/ all the big equipment that got coming, all the shovels & everything, that's going to take quite a few years of it.

me: Mhmm

MRC: Any idea you know, for them span of the length of the time that an, the mine could possibly last, but I guess there's enough ore down around the cascade & Palmer, that, they will have ore for many years to come.

me: Um, what does the future look like for the iron & steel industry in general?

MRC: Well, same thing there, any if they can stop getting their ore from over seas.

me: Mhmm

MRC: From Japan & all these other countries, they could put a tariff on it that they'd use our steel before the used imported.

me: yeah, that's true, what do you think must
~~##~~ be done in the future for CCI to remain
competitive?

MRC: Well, years ago they used to always figure
out the tons per man. No matter if it was
underground or on surface. When it was
underground, it was hard to make many tons
~~##~~ a day per man

me: yeah

MRC: you know now, they can make the pellets,
but, now ~~there~~ gonna rapid develop new
resources + new ways of doing things,

me: Mhmm

MRC: And they're pretty on the ball for doing that.

me: yeah, what do you think has been the key
to success of CCI where other companies have
failed?

MRC: Well, the main thing I think, is that they
had good workers,

me: Mhmm

MRC: Good production from most of ~~the~~ workers
that they had, I had to say it was ~~their~~
work force that kept them going, and they had
good leaders + managers.

me: yeah

MRC: throughout the years.

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

MCC: Well, I never ^{worked} (laugh) I never worked
on the mine when any women ~~were~~
there. I don't know, but ~~there~~ ^{they're} becoming
a part ~~of~~ all the work places, in mines
and in the ~~mining~~ ^{mining} industry I
think they're important to, as long as they can do
the job.

me: yep, ok., you were in the union, right?

MCC: yep.

me: Have you ever experienced being on strike?

MCC: 5 times.

me: five times?

MCC: yep, and in those days there was no give-aways
when you went on strike, that was it.

me: Mmm.

MCC: There was no ^{food} baskets, and no, nothing,
me: What mines did you work at when you were
on strike?

MCC: Well, I was at the Mathu-B, the Mather "H",
that was the 2 mines we were on strike 5 times,

me: wow

MCC: And long ones, too, 112 days, 119 days

me: Really, did your wife work then?

MCC: No, she was the cook. I had to go + hustle + find a
carpenter's job, or I ~~did~~ drove taxi cabs. I do any-
thing you could do to try to stay afloat.

me: yeah, did you have any kids when you were on
strike?

MCC: Oh, yeah, I had anywhere from 3 to 1/2 a dozen
kids.

me: Mmm.

MCC: yeah

me: That must've been hard.

MrC: It was tough.

me: how does a strike begin?

MrC: Well, mostly over wages.

MrC: That was the biggest topic, and a, trying to get insurance for men, but in those days it was, I think it was, we used to always go for 18¢ an hour.

me: wow!

MrC: Several strikes. That was their, their, pay raise they were looking for. But, better working conditions, and

me: How much money did you make when you started working at the mine?

MrC: 60¢ an hour in underground. include

me: Really?

MrC: Yeah, \$28 a day

me: That sure has changed a lot

MrC: yeah; but, but, it was a lot working underground. I delivered ice, for a couple of years I started to work when I was 16, and I delivered ice for a couple of years, and the top pay there was \$3.00 a day, and there was no overtime, if it was a 10 hour day, then that's what you got, 3 bucks.

me: wow

MrC: So the minute I got 18, I got a job in the mine.

me: Did you have to ~~be~~ be 18 to work there?

MrC: yeah, you had to be 18, I was the youngest miner in the Moss Mine when I started, include

me: Really?

MrC: 1940

me: o.k.

me: In general, what was the most interesting or unique story that you can remember from any time the workers were on strike?

mrc: Well, the guys that thought they could work, they used to have a dump truck at the mine. At the time, the men owned a dump truck, I guess, and they use to get a 1/2 a dozen or so guys that were going to keep working. And they used to try to run through the picket line w/ that dump truck.

me: Mhmm

mrc: So, ~~when~~ when you had a mine that employed 500 men, or better, you know there was no 6 guys going to be able to run a mine, even if they let 'em in there.

me: Mhmm

mrc: So, that was about the most interesting thing that takes place at a Union Meeting or a Union

me: Rally?

mrc: Well, they usually, well, the union meetings I've gone to, they got lots of things to vote on, and they talk about safety first, they talk about you pension & what can do to improve it, and, a, I still, a, I belong to the retirees union now, it's the same union, but it's retirees. We meet once a month. We usually try to get a speaker of some sort,

me: Uh, huh,

mrc: W/ an interesting topic. It doesn't have to be mining, it can be, we've had, U.P. Worsening has been there, and try to keep the guys up to par on the, if they have to have home nursing & different things. And then we always have coffee & lunch,

me: Well that's nice!

mrc: Yeah!

me: What other sorts of things do you do at these meetings?

Mrc: Well, that's about it mostly.

me: O.K.

Mrc: They only last about an hour ~~1/2~~ 20:30,

me: Mmmm

Mrc: Yeah

me: In your opinion, why is the ~~work~~ steelwork
union so important to the workers?

Mrc: Well, if they got 'em everything they got,
the union did, if we wouldn't ~~have~~ have that
union, we'd still be makin' 3^d a day! *include 1st & 2nd*

me: Mmmm

Mrc: And there'd be no safety 1st, or no retirement
fund. My grandfather retired, he started for the CI
in 1898 & retired in 1939 & his pension was
8^d a month. He lived in a company house.
Down in the 20 houses, and 4th of that 8^d had to go
~~to wards~~ for rent, so you can see how
much better the people of now, w/ pension
you know, it gives ya a little buying power
you able to maintain your home,

me: It sure has changed alot!

Mrc: Yup.

me: What do you enjoy doing in your ~~space~~ spare
~~time~~ time?

Mrc: Sleepin'! (Laughing) NO, I can't do much, I'm crippled up,
but I like to the camp in the summer and, we've
got a big family here, I've always like to cook

me: Oh, oh, really?

Mrc: Yeah, I don't cook much more, but ~~like~~ ~~to~~ ~~cook~~

me: What kind of foods do you like to cook?

Mrc: Everything! From roasts, to steaks, to pork chops, to,
I can make Swede dishes.

me: Oh, really?

Mrc: yes, ^{Does say} (3 root roasts?) and lots of things, when
my wife worked, she worked for 8 years, at the Bakery in
16 Regaume, so I became the cook —

mrc (continued); and, a. She quit in 1987, and she ~~became~~ took over the kitchen again. But I like to barbeque + _____

me: Oh, yeah that's fun. If you had a chance, to do it all over again would you make the same ~~choice~~ ^{career} choice?

mrc: Well, actually you'd have to. That was the only industry we had here, really. I suppose you'd have to go w/ the same things that was the biggest employer, CCI, and, a, you'd have to do the same thing over, I imagine.

me: So you did it a 2nd time would you stay in the Navy longer?

mrc: ya, I'd a put 20 years in the Navy. That's the only other thing I'd of cared for.

me: Mhmm

me: Looking back over the years, what other impressions stand out in your ~~mind~~ ^{mind} concerning your association w/ CCI?

mrc: Well, I always had a good association w/ them. I ~~had~~ think I always had done a good days work. And, I think if you do a good days work you ~~should~~ shouldn't be ashamed of anything. When you got get your paycheck, you shouldn't be ashamed to take it. — Endquote

me: Yeah

mrc: But they were good to work for. I got along w/ all the bosses + everyone I never had any problems

me: Well that's good. Before we end the interview, ~~is there anything you'd like to add~~ ^{is there anything you'd like to add} else that come to mind before, before, beg — we end it you'd like to add?

mrc: Well, there isn't too much, I think we covered pretty near everything. I used to like, years ago when the mines were going, the Mather 'A' out here, I every mine had a shaft house, and, at x-mas time, I think I might have a star at the top of the shaft house, —

MRC: (Con't): and I would have a cross, and, Mathew
used to have 300 'em out there, there was a
wreath would flash on. and a cross
would come, and then there was a star.
I think maybe Cliff shaft may still ~~have~~ have
a star on top the shaft house

ME: M H m m.

MRC: But most of the shaft houses are all gone now.
But that was neat at Christmas time.

ME: I bet that was! Could you like see it if you rode
highway or somewhere you could see the shaft houses
w/ ~~the~~ the different things at Christmas time

ME: That sounds nice.

MRC: ~~all~~ all lit up, yeah,

ME: Well, Thank you very much for your time!

MRC: well your quite welcome, It's been a pleasure to
sit here w/ you.

ME: well thank you very much.

~~Navy - Blue~~

~~Safety - ~~blue~~ green~~

~~underground mining - ~~green~~ pink~~

~~wages - purple~~

~~strikes orange.~~ **and Union**

~~working w/ Dad - yellow~~ and other guys

X-mas lights - ~~green~~ Red ✓

sequer

Background
working w/ Dad

Navy

strikes

wages

pickets

