LOUIS LOUSHIN

The Verdigris Project
A partnership between KBMF 102.5FM and The Butte-Silver Bow Archives.

With funding from The National Endowment for the Humanities, the Montana History Foundation, members of the Butte America Foundation, and SARTA.

www.verdigrisproject.org

Oral History Transcript of Louis Loushin

Interviewers: Clark Grant & Aubrey Jaap
Interview Date: April 19th, 2019
Location: Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives
Transcribed: March 2021 by Adrian Kien

Aubrey Jaap: It's April 19th, 2019. We're here with Louis Loushin. I'd like you to start and just tell me a little bit about your parents. Give us a little background of you.

Louis Loushin: My parents.

Jaap: Yes.

Loushin: Well, they were both from Yugoslavia. My mother come to Aspen, Colorado when she was 17 years old and her and my dad got married. He was from over there too. And, I was born there in 1925, October 25th. Of course, it was a little later, it was depression time and there was more jobs and everything over there. So my dad had some friends in Butte. So he came to Butte when I was three years old and he got a job in the mines here and he stayed here. And then he sent for our family and we all moved to Butte. We've been here ever since.

Jaap: That's a while, Louie.

Loushin: That's quite a while. Yeah, I'm getting old now. I'm still here.

Jaap: So, where was your family home here? Where did you live here? Your home? What was the address in here?

Loushin: 310 Shields Avenue.

Jaap: And that's where you grew up?

Loushin: That's where I grew up. And, we got out of there when the company bought us out for the pit. And now I live at 3551 Columbus. That's down the flat, down there.

Jaap: Oh yeah, sure. I know where that's at. So where did you go to school?

Loushin: I went to the Jefferson School to the sixth grade. Then I went to the Grant school from the sixth to the eighth. Then I went to Butte High till I graduated.

Jaap: Do you have any particular childhood memories? What did you do as a kid for fun?

Loushin: For fun? Well, we skated. I skated. There was a skating rink on every corner, I think. And we skated most of the time in wintertime. Sleigh ride. Of course, when I was little, there wasn't too many cars. We'd go on top of Shields Avenue there and skate all the way down to the bridge. And I don't think we'd see maybe two cars in the whole night from six o'clock till nine o'clock. So we had a good sleigh riding time then, because we didn't have to worry about the cars. And, we skated a lot. We had a skating rink and we played hockey with brooms, broomsticks, and we sleigh rided. That's about it in the wintertime, but we did a lot of that.

Jaap: So, did your family have any traditions that they brought from Yugoslavia with them?

Loushin: No, not really. My father was a miner and that's what he did. Of course, he died young. He died when he was 59. He had, they call it the Mountain Con. It was silicosis. They got it from the mines. When he worked down there, there was no air pumps like they got now. There was no air down there. They breathed all that dust in. He didn't hold up too long. So he bought the bullet when he was 59 years old.

Jaap: Did your dad talk about work often when he came home? Did your dad talk about work often when he came?

Loushin: Oh yeah. It's a tough day. Tough day. That was his words. Most of the time. Yeah. And, uh, he worked at just about all the mines in Butte. They'd close one down for something, and then they'd open another one. And he moved all over. He worked at quite a few of the mines, but he didn't like it. But that time there, if you didn't have an education there wasn't any jobs to have besides the mine.

Jaap: How did you get into mining, Louis, was it your dad?

Loushin: I was going to go to school. I went into the service in 1944. And, I went into the service and was in there for two years. And when I got out, I got a job out at the Rocker Mill for a while. And, that was where they got all the timber for the mines. They cut all the timber, the posts and the panels and everything. And they shipped them back to the mines. So I was over there for about a year and I put my name in for an oiling job on the hill out. There was the oiling in the engine rooms, taking care of the engines, oil them and grease them and keep the place clean. And I did get a job there. I only worked about a year out at Rocker and I got this job oiling. Well, I was going to go to school and I was trying to make up my mind with school where I was going to go to, because I had that coming from the service. I couldn't make up my mind right then. So I got that job oiling and it was a real good job. And I was really interested in it because them engines, they were the ones that hoisted the miners down the mine and hoisted them back up and pulled all the ore out of the ground.

So I was really interested in that and I said, well, I'm going to stay here for a year or so. I can always go back to school. Because I was only 21 years old. And so I stayed there and the more I stayed there, the better I liked it. And my mother kept bothering me. And she says, "Well, when are you going to go to school? You better make up your mind. You're going to go to school." I says, "Mom, I don't think I'm going to go to school." I says, "I like this job." And I says, "I can get to be an engineer if I stay here." And the engineer is the guy that run the hoist. So anyway, she didn't push me too much, but she said, "I think you're making a mistake. You got a chance to get four years of college for nothing with the government." So I said, "Well, I'll think about it."

But everyday I liked the job better and I don't know why I really liked it, but I was really interested in the hoists. And I said, "Well, if I go to school, I'll have to quit this job." Well, you was getting seniority when you started working up there. Your seniority started the day you started working. So I'd already had about a year and a half in and I needed another half a year then I could apply for a license, a second class engineer's license. So that entitled you to run all these small engines that were down in the mine. The sinker engines that made the shafts deeper and they moved men from station to station, level to level. And, of course you got a couple dollars an hour more pay too, but you had to go down in the mine to run these engines. And my mother wasn't very fond of that, but anyway, I did it and I had them sinker jobs for about two

years. And then I got the two years in there. Then I was capable of getting the first-class engineer's license.

So it was just like a college education. You had to have four years of experience oiling on the engines and running these small engines. Every time, you got a chance, you sat with the engineer on the main engines that was doing the work, and you picked up your knowledge there and you'd sit with him. They told you they wanted you to just sit there with that engineer at least an hour a day. So you could pick up a lot of things and ask them questions. You know, then after four years, as they started to break in on the engines. At dinner time, when they stopped for lunch, you got to sit in a chair and monkey around with the engine, pull the skips up and down, you know?

And, then as the engineer thought you were capable of running, he'd let you pull rock, pull the ore out of the mind, but you couldn't handle any men yet because you weren't that good. You know? So you'd learn how to pull rock. That was a tricky job too, because when you come up there to dump that rock, you were only that far from the shim wheels up there. You pulled it over the top of the shim wheels where it dropped it down in the bottom of the mine.

So you had to be real careful. And then after you got the handle of the engine pretty good and you weren't scared of it, then they let you run the cages. Well, they had a set of cages. There was four cages in each engine. And these cages held the miners. They hauled the miners up and down. You could put in seven miners or seven guys on each cage and it was four cages. You had 28 men when they were loaded. So when you got to lower the shift, all the men would be out there on the sheets. They called them the sheets, the metal ships that were on the shaft. They were by the shaft, all the men were there waiting to go down.

So there was two guys and they were called station tenders. They handled them cages and they rang all the bells. So the bell system. That was a thing there. You had to learn all these bells. The Steward mine over here, I ran that for about nine years, I guess. And I got on that and that went down to 3,900 feet.

So each station had a bell of its own. Like the 200 station was two and two on the bells. And the station tenders had a little rope about 14 inches long on each station in the mine. The stations went all the way down two to whatever deep the mine was. And, each one had their own signal. Like the 200 would be two and two, and that station tender, if you wanted to go from surface to the 200 level, he would ring it two and a little pause and two more. So, you know, then you went to 200, then if you wanted to go like, say, the 2,400, he would ring eight and three. He'd ring eight bells and a little pause and three more. So you'd went to that level at 3,400, it was eight and four. Seven and five was the 3000 foot level.

And if you made a mistake, if you added one or subtract one, you went a hundred feet out of your way. Like if he gave you seven and five. That would be the 30. But if you got eight and five, you'd go to the 4,000 foot level, which would be wrong. So he'd have to go all the way to the 40,000 foot level and then go all the way back up to the 30 and you'd lose a lot of time. You make five or six mistakes like that. You lose a lot of time. That makes them mad because you're losing pulling these rock. You could pull two skips of rock to make up for that, you know, and you'd lose a lot of rock and they don't like that. But some of these stations tenders, when they'd ring this bell, they ring the bell and it's like I say, it's got a little rope, about 14, 16 inches long. He reached it right out of the cage. You can grab it. There's one on every station and he'd ring the

bell. And sometimes they'd ring it fast and sometimes they ring it nice. Like a lot of station tenders will be a nice guy and they'll ring it one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, one, two, three, four. And a lot of them guys, they ring up ringing. Boy, you just get a bundle of bells and you don't know where the split is because they have to pause between, you know, like the eight and the four. They got to give you a couple seconds pause there because you can't tell if it's seven and five or seven or four or whatever.

So the station tenders, usually when you work with them, I worked with same station tenders sometimes for 10 years before they'd get transferred to another place or I'd get transferred. So you got to know them pretty good, and you could understand their bells and they knew how you could understand them to ring. And you never had no trouble. You get some young guys in there. They're working there just during the summertime for school. They're out of school and they think they're hot shots when they start ringing these bells. Well, they ring them, and boy, you can't figure out what they rang. You know, they just ring a bunch of bells and you don't go. If you don't go, they got a buzzer. Step on that buzzer. And that means I didn't get the signal. Do it again. So then he gets mad. So he rings it twice as fast, twice as bad. And you can't get it. So you buzz it again. He rings it again and he gets mad and he keeps ringing them worse all the time. So then you get mad. I get mad because he won't cooperate.

So anyhow, sometimes I'll give him a buzz again. And after that I had about six buzzes. We lost about 10, 15 minutes. So I'm really mad then. And he goes one, two, three, and that's just like, he's calling me names, you know? And I said, well, I'll give him a ride. So when he rings, he'll give me eight and four, which would be the 3,400 foot level. And he goes one, two, three all the way up to eight. And then he waits a minute. And he gives the other four. Well, I wait until he gets on the cage and I don't care what he rings. He rings 500 bells if he wants, but he's going for a ride. So why I'll take him up that shaft. I just open that throttle. Take him right off his feet. Put them right on the deck and he'll be sitting on the deck. And when I go up there about 150 feet, 200 feet, I just slam on the brake and them cable stretched like rubber bands, you know? So when I stop quick, he goes up and down, up and down. He'll bounce for about two minutes. And you can guarantee it. He'll never ring a bad bell again. So it's about 10 minutes before he even announces his next bell. He's sitting down on the bottom of the deck and he can't move. And I sit there and wait for him until he comes to. And he'll come right to surface and quit.

He says, "I'll never take another ride like that." So he got off the cage and quit. But we never had to do that too much. I know most of the times when he got so mad and they was ringing all kinds of bells, you didn't want a monkey around them. I just take them up and slam on the brake and give them a bounce. And then take them down and give them a bounce. And then they're alright. They ring the bells nice. But, uh, you get these good station tenders. They can ring the bell just so nice, you know. And I could be talking to you and he can ring the bell and I know right where they're going. I don't need, you don't have to. After you're there for a long time, you have to listen to the bells, you know, they'd just come automatic.

So that's the bell system and the bells are really hard to learn. They were hard for me to learn because you get so many. And like I say, you can't miss one or add one because you're going a hundred feet out of your way. And you've got to come back. And I come home one day from work and I was just learning the bell system then. And, uh, my mother says, "How are you doing?" I said, "Not good, Mom." I says, "I ain't going to stay there. I'm going to have to quit. I'm gonna go next week and see what school I'm going to go to." Well, anyway, but three days

later I went to work and them bells, I don't know what happened, but they automatically hit me in the head. And I could understand them just like English. I never had no trouble again with the bells. So then I got the bells. You have to be the oiler and run them sinker engines for approximately two years. And then they send you to Helena to take a physical and a test on the engines.

[00:19:07]

They ask you a million questions about the engine. And all the safety questions they ask you. What would you do in this case when you went here or there? And it took a couple of hours to take that examination. And then you had to pass it. There was no monkeying around because, and you couldn't cheat because you could cause somebody's kicking the bucket, you know, death. You had to know what you were doing and then they pass you and then you took the physical and we had to take a physical every year on our birthday. And if you didn't pass the physical, they took you out, took you off of the job. They'd give you another job, down in the mine or someplace, but you couldn't run the engines Just like a pilot. You got 28 men on that cage. And if something happens to you, you had a heart attack or something, they'd go right to the bottom. Or if you're coming up with him and pulled him right over the top of the shiv wheel. So you had to be careful and be in good health. So I made it for 41 years almost.

Jaap: So did every mine have the same system or were there variations between mines and that bell system?

Loushin: All the mines were the same. They all have the same bell system. But the engines were different. Like the Steward over here on Main street, that was a big air hoist. That ran by air. But if you went to the Leonard or the Mountain Con, they were electric engines. And if you went to the High Ore, you went to a steam engine, run by steam and they were all different. The electrics are easy to run because they're smooth. But the air engines, you gotta go by the air. And when that air gets in them pistons, sometimes the air don't get in there the right way. And it locks and you can't move it, you know, for a minute, you got to either drop it down a couple inches. Because that piston in there gets stuck. And it's right there where the air is passing through. So you have to move it one way or the other, to move the air so that that piston will move.

And sometimes the only time that was bad was when they were working in the shaft. Sometimes they're changing timber in the shaft. And they have to move maybe just two or three inches, you know, if something's wrong, they've got to change it. And they're standing on the deck and just standing there and they're not tied in or nothing. They could fall off. So you gotta be real careful with them. So if they give you three bells and you're running an air engine and you start, three bells means to come up slow, you'll go one, two, three, and you move up slow. Well, if it's locked in that position where the air don't get into the pistons right. You have to get it off of that center. And you've got to drop it down four or five inches or hoist it four or five inches. But you can't hoist because the air won't go through there right. And if you drop it down, you scare them miners because they only need a couple inches.

They're trying to get a big piece of timber set in there and they don't want you to go down because they're right there and you go to move it down. He stops you, give you a long bell. He'll give you a long drag bell. "Don't go down." So he'll give you two bells, again, two real slow bells, or three slow bells and you can't go up because you have to go down first to get it off of that center position. And you'll start down again. They'll give you a drag bell again. "You can't

go down." And I can't go up. So during the middle of the stations. So you can't talk to them on the phone. You can't do nothing. So I start to drop it down another inch, half an inch at a time, they give that big stop bell. "Don't go down!" So I always made arrangements with the station tenders. I says, "Now, you're working in the shaft. If you get them close calls where you're putting a new guide in or something, changing an old guide. And I says, I gotta go down. Now you've got to understand, I cannot go up. You ring me three or four times to go up and I can't go up. I got to go down before I go up. I got to get it off of center. So they understood that, you know, and after that, then we never had that trouble. But you made arrangements with station tenders, anytime it was a bad spot. You know, then they knew what you were doing.

Jaap: How about with those steam engines? Were there any tricks with those?

Loushin: Well, I never did. That was the only steam engine and the guys that were there stayed there. You'd never got moved because you went by seniority when you started, you know, and them guys were . . . I never had to go there. I went there oiling a few days. And they're pretty smooth and they're the most powerful ones of the whole bunch.

And the air engines are strong too. And the Steward would go, they had a speed limit on them. When we hoisted men, you could only go 800 feet a minute. But if you're pulling rock, we could go 3,200 feet a minute. Now, if you went 800 feet a minute, it's like all these stations, like from surface all the way down to the 4,000 foot level or the 5,000 foot level, every hundred feet is a station. And they all got big lights on them. And the stations are pretty big. When you get off the cage, you can move around on the station and tunnels or the drifts. There may be two drifts off each station going into where the mines are working and they got railroad tracks going into each one. So you had to stop on a station and they'll go to every station. Every station is a hundred feet apart. So the bells are just that way. Every 500 feet, the bells change. Like it goes from 2 and 5, that's the 500. You know, from five to 10 is another 500 feet. So that would be three and one, three and five. And then it goes to four and five, five and five, six, and five, seven and five till you get all the way down to the 4,000 foot level, which would be nine and five.

So you have to learn all them bells. And if you leave one out or add one, you're in trouble. And the station tenders, they know when you're just starting out. And they put up with you and they'll ring the bells slower for you until you learn. And then after you're there for a couple of years, they can ring them as fast as they want. And I know just exactly where they're going, regardless of the bells, you know. We know what they're doing. So we got along pretty good.

Well, then the more I stayed there, the better I liked it. School went out the window. I didn't go to school and I never regretted it. I liked it right up to the time I retired.

I ran just about every engine in Butte. And I liked every job I had. Of course, the only bad part was we had to work three shifts - day shift, afternoon and graveyard. And I didn't like that, especially on holidays. We had to work holidays and Sundays, but the holidays, when you had to work, they doubled your wages for holidays. So it was worth it.

And, uh, that's about all. When we didn't have men or I worked on engines where they never had no skips on them. They didn't pull no rock. They just lowered timber. And the timber went down into different stations and they moved the timber around to different mines that needed it. So, that was about it.

Jaap: So tell me about your first time underground. Do you remember the first time, the impact it had on you? And can you describe that for me?

Loushin: The first time I went down the mine, I wasn't scared because I just was at that age where you don't get scared, so easy, you know. And I went down the mine and boy, I couldn't believe how things were down there. And I didn't imagine it was the way I thought it was. And you had to go in these drifts and it's all rock and you'd see a boulder sitting here on the tracks. You'd say, "What happened?" He said, "Well, that rock fell out." He said, "You gotta be careful when you're walking in these places, you look around, you see something loose, you get somebody and they'll knock it down, you know."

But the first job I had, I had to go in the mine about a mile, I guess, walking these tunnels. And they had a little engine back there and they were digging an air shaft. They were digging a shaft and they had this little hoist and you only went up or down. So it only got two bells to go down or three bells to come up. So I never had nothing to do with bells, just them two signals and I'd stay on them jobs for maybe a month, two months. And then they'd get a job someplace else. They'd move you around till you got quite a bit of experience on all the different jobs and you get used to that. And then after you get off of them sinker engines, then they moved you up. And then the engineer up there started to break you in on the big ones up on surface. And then you had to go about another year on there till you'll learn pretty good. Then they give you a job running. And the first day that you're on your own. There's no engineer there. You're by yourself and you can't make any mistakes. So that was, that was probably the most ticklish day you put in. The day you got it by yourself, you know? You had to be careful.

Like I say, you could pull it over the top of the shiv wheel or you could drop it in the bottom. And one day I pulled the Steward right over the top of the shiv wheel. I was pulling rock. And when you pull rock, when that skip comes up to dump, it's right up there. The clamps that are on the cable, that's holding the skip. Them clamps, the first three or four clamps are already in the shiv wheel. So that the point of the deck is right there and maybe two feet from the shiv wheel, right there. And that's as high as you can go. You can't go no higher. So I was up there. I was pulling to 3,400. And when you got that side up and you dumped it, the other sides down there on the other side, because you're running counterbalance. And the other side, they're loading the other side, when you've got the upside, that's already dumping. So you don't pay no attention to that one that dumped because you know it's dumping and you wait for them to load the other side.

[00:30:49]

Well, he'll give you a signal two, one and two. That means it's loaded. Take it up and dump it. There's nobody on it. Just the ore. So you start off. You have to give the throttle when you're on an air engine and you have to, you have to fill them cylinders full of air before you even touch the brake. Because if you don't, that side will go down and you ain't got no room up there, that other side that's up there. Cause it's up there as close as it can go. So you've got to make sure you give it a lot of air. And you just ease the brake off real slow and you make sure that drum is going in the right direction. It's going this way. And it has to go that way.

Well, anyway, I was pulling the 3,400 and they loaded the bottom. They loaded the bottom deck or the bottom skip and they give me the two, one and two. Well, I opened the throttle. And when I just took the brake off real slow, you got to make sure that drum is going in the right direction,

but that skip was loaded. Well, there was eight tons in that. And that's 4,000 feet down. You got all the weight of the cable, plus the decks, plus the ore. And I'm right in the shiv wheel with the other side. So when I took that brake off to see if it would run, it just went whoosh. It just pulled that brake almost right out of my hand. So that side goes up into the shiv wheel, over the top of the shiv wheel and the cable didn't break, but it pulled the skip right on top of the shiv wheel. Well, that's when I threw the other brake on and stopped it. I could have brought it right into the engine room, if the cable didn't break. Well, there was rock flying all over and the men out on the sheets were waiting to go down the mine. Some were waiting for a ride down. Well, you ought to see them scatter. Stuff was falling. Metal was falling off the gallows frame. Oh, you couldn't believe what happened. And I just almost passed out. I couldn't believe what had happened.

So I looked at everything. I says, well, my reverse was in the right direction. 'Cause when you're running an air engine, you've got to reverse and it moves from here to there and you got to get it down and that's for that side to come up. Well, that's the side. I had it this way for this side to come up, which was right. See? And I said, well, the reverse is in the right position. Why, what happened? So I couldn't figure it out. Well, the bosses and the superintendent, they all come running into the engine room and wanted to know what I'd done wrong. I says, I don't know what happened. I walked down to where all the mechanism was, off of the engine room, walked over there and I looked and I looked right underneath the stand where I was sitting. And there's a rod that was about two inches in diameter. It was steel rod, about six feet long. It broke right in half. Well, that was the reverse lever. And that broke.

Well, when it broke the machine moved from that side, went over to this side, traveled four feet, and you can't hear that. You can't hear that moving. So that was in the wrong direction. It was in the wrong direction. And I said, I'm saved. So I hollered to the superintendent and he come up. I says, “There's the problem.” He says, I'll be go to hell. He said, and he says, yup. And it broke. And they couldn't figure out how it broke because, Jesus, for years and years they don't ever break them.

So anyway, that left me off the totem pole. Anyway, it took them about six months to fix that damage. They had to shut the mine down. They had to put a whole new gallows frame on top. They had to change the wheels.

Jaap: At the Steward?

Loushin: At the Steward. Uh huh. So I stayed there. I had a good job. Sometimes they wouldn't move the cage for an hour, you know, and I wouldn't have to do nothing. Just sit there, read the paper.

Jaap: So is that the only instance you had with something like that happening?

Loushin: Well, that was the only time. And one time I was working at the Leonard. I was working on the chippy. And that was just a single hoist. That just lowered timber, lowered men and hoisted men, and lowered timber for the mine. And I was working on that one day and I had one of the best station tenders that ever rung a bell. His name was Hansen. And he liked the bottle and he went to work with a lot of happiness in him, you know. He'd done more work in eight hours than most of them station tenders done in 16 hours. And the bosses, they'd never fire him. When he come out a little bit tipsy, they'd send him home, you know. He says, come back

tomorrow. But they never ever, ever fired him. But this one day anyway, he had a couple, I think. And he never wasted a trip. If a guy wanted a ride from down below, he'd go down to get him. But before he went down, he'd put some timber on and he'd take some timber down with him and he didn't have to do that. All he had to do was go down and move the boss, you know, but he'd always, he'd save time, take some timber down with him. And then he'd do what he had to do. And when he come up, this one time, he moved this boss from one level to another level. And then he had a long bunch of pipe. The pipe was, I guess, 15, 20 feet long. It was two inch pipe. And he had about 20 lengths that he had to take to surface. They were old pipes, you know, he put him on the deck. Well, he run the cage down below the station where you're standing so he could drop this pipe down in this top deck. And then when he gets all this pipe in there, you have to get a cable or something when you wind the top pipe together. So it won't stick out because you only got so much room in that shaft. And, anyway, he got all the pipe on there and never bothered to tie it. I guess he figured he had enough on there and it wouldn't move.

But I was coming up with it and he never gave me five slow bells, either. When you got anything that's long and you got to go slow, he's supposed to give you five slow bells, and then he rings you to surface. So, you know something is long on there and you gotta take it easy. Well, he didn't give me, he just gave me the three fast bells and he was on the second deck and the pipe was on the top deck. Well, it was coming up and I went about about 800 feet a minute. Well, that's pretty fast, but that's because the guy was on it, you know? And anyway, that thing, the pipe come out and went into the shaft. And when that come up, I could see that cable and it stretched like a rubber band. The cage completely stopped immediately. But the cable stretched and then came back and stretched and came back.

And I said, Holy smokes. I don't know what I hit. That was about the 400 foot level, right in between the 400 and the 500 foot level. And that's where the cage stopped. So I called on the phone right away. I called surface and I told him, I said, you better get the big hoist and go down between the four and the 500. I says, we hit something. I said, and this cage stopped so fast. I almost broke the cable. So they went down there right away. And by the time they got down there, Hanson was on the station, on the 500 station. He got out of that deck and climbed down and got on that deck. When he was down there, he was all full of blood. He had a boot full of blood where he was bleeding. He was cut. I think it cut him across his chest. I think he got 200 and some stitches from one side to the other.

Well, he stopped so fast, he flew up in the air, when he come down, he come down on the gate, these two metal gates. And he come down, half was on this side of the gate, half was on this side and it just ripped him wide open. Well, anyway, they got him up to surface and I ran out to see how bad he was. And, uh, he was nothing but blood. So they run him up to the hospital right away. And when I got off a shift, I run up to the hospital to see him and he says, "Boy, we had a tough time, didn't we?" I said, "Not we, you." And, he told me, he said, "Well, I didn't tie that." Well, once they found out that the pipes wasn't tied, they knew what happened. So they couldn't blame me. That was his fault for not tying them. And he admitted it. He says, "I should have tied the pipe, but I didn't." So. We have to pay the consequences for that. So that was the only bad wreck I had where somebody got hurt.

Jaap: So, how did you feel when the open pit mining started? What were some of the changes?

Loushin: Well, we didn't like it, but we thought they'd eventually shut the mines down because that's going to expand and get bigger. Well, that was, let's see five or six years, I guess, that I

worked after the pit. Well, then they shut . . . I had enough seniority to stay up on the engine rooms for quite a while, but then they shut some mines down and I was the last engineer to get out of there. So they sent me down the pit on the shovels. So I broke in on the shovels and in about six months I could run the shovels good, you know. And when they shut the mines down, they put me on the shovels. So I didn't lose no job or no time. I worked steady. Then as soon as they opened up an engine, I went back on, but I never worked much in the pit. I worked maybe one year out of my 40 years that I've worked in the pit. Then eventually they shut the mines down. I was one of the last engineers to work on the Hill. There was two engineers older than me, and they closed the jobs down with, but I did close the Steward down. I was on that, the last engineer there.

Jaap: And what was that feeling like, as someone who worked on the Hill and seeing underground mining cease? Can you describe that to me? How you felt about that?

[00:42:46]

Loushin: No, I don't know. Can you?

Jaap: Well, you spent, you know, 40 years working with underground mining. How did it feel? What was it like when it stopped? Did it feel like a big loss?

Jaap: Oh, yeah, it was bad. I mean, we all felt bad about it. You know, we stayed there like 40 years, that's a long time on the job. And I really liked the job. I can't say I ever didn't like it. And that's why I stayed. I was happy to hold 40 years. A lot of times on holidays I didn't want to go to work, but I did. But I really liked it. I liked it right up till the last day I put in there. And the last day, then I went down in the pit. I finished my last year down in the pit on the shovels and I was down there when I quit the bottom of the pit. I was the last one to run that shovel down the very bottom. When I come up, that was the end of the pit too.

Jaap: Really?

Loushin: Yeah, it was a long trip. Yeah.

Jaap: So as the pit expanded. Um, well, you said your family home was in the way of the pit expansion, correct? Your family home was in the way of the pit expansion and you had to move. Did the company buy you out?

Loushin: The company bought the house and then we, uh, well, my mother died and my father died before the company bought them out. Then me and my wife had my mother's house and we remodeled it. And then a couple of years later, the company come and bought us out. So we built a house down where we live now. We built a new house there.

Jaap: Did you have a close neighborhood? Did you lose that feeling of community when you had to move?

Loushin: Yeah, that was, that was sad because up there we knew everybody, four blocks around. It was called Parrot Flat. And, uh, I knew everybody from the Jefferson school up to four blocks up that way and this way. We knew all the dogs' names, even. Yeah. It was really a shame then. It was tough to move. It really was. Now I don't even know my neighbors. I've got a son that lives next door to me, but the house on the South side of me, they got three sets of neighbors and I never did know them. They didn't come out of the house even. And the ones on that side, I

knew them real good. I still know them. And one's on the other side, I know them. They're not like they were up at the parrot flat. They all say hello and stuff like that. But we got to really be friends with all them people up there, knew the kids. Names of the kids. And like I say, even the dogs we knew.

Jaap: Did you guys, or any neighbors you knew, did they fight being bought out?

Loushin: A lot of them didn't want to. A lot of them held off and they raised the price of the house. If you thought it was worth more, they'd come down and talk to you. And you could keep the house. They'd buy it and they'd give you so long to either move it. Or you could tear it down to wherever you want it, take off of it. You could, you know, you could move everything out of the inside. There was a good roof on there. You could take the roof, we could do and take any part, all of it, but they give you so long to do it.

Jaap: How did you meet your wife?

Loushin: I knew her since she was born. She only lived three blocks away from me. Okay. But I never paid any attention to her. I went into the service, come back out and I always said hi to her. Hello to her. And, I never had a date with her or nothing, you know, and one day we were over. Her father owned the Parrot Bar. Called it. I don't know if you've ever heard of it, Coochie's Bar. One of the best bars in the whole Butte. It was great. He gave away more than he sold. And, uh, anyway, that's where our hanging out was. We always went there first, you know. And she come in one day and the Messopist, you heard of the Mesopist? was down in the Rose Garden. So the Mesopist was that night and she'd come in and she was kind of dressed up and I was out in the bar playing pool and she come by and she was watching us for a minute and I says, “Hi, Marie, how are you?” She says, “Fine. How are you? Are you winning?” I said, “Well, sometimes.” And, I said, “Where are you going all dressed up?” And she said, “I ain't going anywhere. Why?” I says, “Well, I thought maybe you were going to the Mesopist.” It was five o'clock. Then she says, “No, nobody asked me to go.” I said, “I'll take you, do you want to go?” And I was kidding her, you know? And she says, “Yeah, I'll go.” She said, “I'll ask my mother if I can go.”

And I said, “Yeah, you do that.” And I never pay really no attention to it. So she went over, she asked her mother, she says, “Yeah, you can go. We know Louis.” You know, well, they knew me all my life. And uh, so anyway, she come over and she says, “My mother and dad told me I can go to the Messopist with you.” And I said, “Oh Good.” So I went home changed and I picked her up about eight o'clock and we went down there and we had a real good time. Of course, all the kids I knew were down there and we had a good time. So I dropped her off.

[00:49:01]

Her mother told me the next day when I talked to her, she says, "Marie said she had a good time. She had a lot of fun." I said, "Yeah, we had a good time." And that was all that was said. Well, anyway, a couple of weeks went by and I says, I'll ask her if she wants to go to the show. And it just kept going from there. Three years later, we got married. She was still in school. She was a senior in school. And so I had to wait until she finished school. Anyway.

Jaap: So I was doing some digging in the newspapers and I found your guys's wedding announcement in there. I think it said that the bridesmaids wore lilac.

Loushin: Yeah. That's her. Yeah.

Jaap: So fun. Yeah. You can take that if you want. You can show her.

Loushin: Well, I got lots of these. I got some of them anyway. But I could take it. You can give it to me. Boy, that was a long time ago. 66 years.

Jaap: What is the date on it? Was it in the 40's that you were married?

Loushin: Yup. We've been married 66 years. I think. I had two kids.

Jaap: Are your kids here?

Loushin: Yeah, my son, he run the pharmacy at K-Mart. He had his own medicine shop when he first started. He started his own business and right across the street from there civic center. He had a shop there. He built a medicine shop and he was doing good. Real good. And he was working for the medicine shop company. They had medicine shops all over the country. But the better his business got the more they wanted, you know, and he said, "Geez, I'm just working for them. I can work for another pharmacy as much as I'm making here, because by the time I pay them there ain't too much left." So, but he couldn't quit. They wouldn't let him quit. He signed a contract for, I think 10 years or 15 years.

And boy, they were strict on that contract. Well, he got so mad and they were giving him a bad time. He had to order all the stuff from them too. And they'd bring a lot of stuff that he didn't order that he'd have to pay for. So anyway, he was fighting with them. He couldn't break that contract. So finally one day he got a lawyer and the lawyer told him you quit, just quit. We'll take care of it from there. So they sent two pharmacists in to run the business and he quit. They were trying to get him to come back and he wouldn't come back. So they were gonna take them to court. But this lawyer had them over a barrel. He says, "You guys done the wrong thing with him all the time he was here." So he says, "Go ahead and take it to court." He says, "He'll come out strong." So they didn't, they just folded it up. So he went to Kmart then and he stayed to Kmart till he retired.

Jaap: Is your other child here?

Loushin: Oh, my daughter? Yeah. She went to Tech when she was a junior and she was going with a kid that graduated from Tech. Leonard Johnson was his name. I don't know if you ever heard him. Well, he graduated. He was in petroleum. He was a petroleum engineer and he got a job in Texas. So he wanted to get married. They were going together for a couple of years already, and she knew him all her life too. They knew each other. He lived down in the flat. He graduated from Tech and when he graduated, he got this job right away. Jobs were easy to get when he graduated. He went to Ohio. He was back East, down to Texas, all over the country and they paid for all that. So he could get the job he wanted to get. So he took the one in Texas for Conoco.

Well, he didn't want to go down there by himself. And he was going with her for two years and they planned to get married, but she had another six months to go in school at Tech. I said, "Well, she ain't going until she gets that diploma." I says, "You can wait six months." And my wife said, "Oh, let her go. She can pick it up down there. She could probably get that last half a year down there in Texas." Well, they never had nothing for her down there. And the closest school was 200 miles. So she wouldn't do that. But anyway, I let her go. I said, make sure you

get that. Well, anyway, he said, "Well, I can't get her in school down here," but he says, "I don't think I'll be here long anyway." He says, "I'll get transferred. And where I go, I'll make sure she picks up her last year." They went to Norway on the next move. And there was no schools there. She could have went to school there. All right. But the first thing she had to do was learn the language.

And they never had no English teachers over there. She had to learn Norwegian. She said it's going to take me five years to learn that language, or more. So that was out. So I said, "Well, you're going to keep monkeying around. You're going to be down there for a couple of years. You send her home with us for six months, that ain't long. She can get her graduation and be through with it." And he says, "Oh, maybe I ain't going to be here very long." Well, they just kept putting it off in it. He liked the job and he was making all kinds of money. You know, he was out in the ocean on one of them oil floats and he had that job and she liked it over there. They met a lot of people from the United States that was working over there. So they had a lot of friends and they traveled all over Europe.

The company, the oil company, when they give him two weeks off. They'd send him to Germany, any place they wanted to go for two weeks, they paid for everything, airfare, hotel, everything. So they traveled all over Europe, got that in at their expense. So I said, well, it's too late now for me to get her to go to school. She's already held five years, but she could have still picked it up, but she'd never come back. I think she was over there for five or six years, and then she didn't come back. Anyway. She went someplace else. And they travelled all over the country. Now he went back to Texas, back to Oklahoma, and then he moved to Alaska.

So they never did get close to home. So they were in Alaska, but nobody stayed there more than eight years, but he stayed there for 16. So we went up there every year to see them. And that was nice. So I was glad they went up there. We went fishing all the time and I liked that fishing. I could have went hunting, but I wouldn't go hunting. They hunt up there where them bears are and you've got to watch them bears. They come right in the tent with you. And if they were hungry, they'd eat you. So I didn't go up there hunting. I went up fishing all the time. But we had some real good fishing trips.

Jaap: So you hunt and fish, any other hobbies?

Loushin: Hobbies? No. I can't say that I had any hobbies. They travelled all over. Done a lot of travel.

Jaap: So I think Clark has some questions.

Grant: I just had some things that I wanted to ask you about to follow up on. I was curious about your time in the service. Did you go over seas?

Loushin: Yeah, I was in there for two years. I ran around with about 15 kids from Butte, right in our neighborhood. All running around together, right till we graduated out of high school. And we all went in the service together. We went to boot camp together. Most of them joined the Navy. A couple of them joined the Marines, but most of them joined the Navy. We all come home for 15 day furlough. And then we went back to the OGU. That was the outgoing unit.

We reported to the outgoing unit. And then they shift you. I signed up for every school I could think of. I signed up for electric school, carpenter, mechanics, and everybody else did too.

Nobody wanted to go overseas, but I didn't mind going over there if I had to go. But anyway, we signed up for school and I was the only one that never got school. They all got school, but me, when I went back from bootcamp to there, 15 days later, I was in my first battle overseas. I got on the Iowa. First, I got on the Colorado. I got on the Colorado in Washington, Seattle. And I liked the Colorado boat. That was one of the oldest battleships we had and I got on it and I got to know a couple of guys. I was on it for a week. This one guy that was attached to the [Colorado], he was part of the crew. He says, "Why don't you go see the exec officer? See if you can stay on the Colorado." So I said, "You think so?" And he says, "Yeah." So I went over and seen him. He said, "No, you can't stay on here. You got your orders. You're going someplace." He said, "We don't know where, but we're going to take you to Hawaii." He said, "You're going to get off there." And he says, "I don't know how long you're going to stay there." So they sent me to Hawaii.

I got on the Colorado and we went to Hawaii that took a week and they were practicing shooting and everything on the Colorado. So I got off of there and I went to this area they had right on the Waikiki beach. We went right on the beach. We had tents to sleep in. And it was nice. I was there for nine days. We never had nothing to do, no watches to watch, swam every day, ate lunch, went back there, laid on the couch, on the banks and come back and swam again, fell asleep for a while. At night, we watched movies and that ended in about eight days.

My name come up on a bulletin board and they put me on a cruiser. It was a light cruiser, the Augusta. And I got on there and it was a brand new ship. And I wanted to stay on that. So I went to the exec officer, "You got your orders. You're going to the Marshall Islands." He says, "You're going to go there and you're going to get on a ship there and that's the ship you're going to stay on." So I thought, Oh, I'll probably get some low down ship or something. And I missed the Colorado, and I missed the Augusta. Now, I'm going to get a . . . Well, anyway, I got there.

Here was this ship. I couldn't believe the size of the ship. It was the USS Iowa, brand new battleship. And that thing was a block long, you know, great, brand new. And I got on that and he says, "That's going to be your home for the rest of the war." And I got on that. And boy was I glad to get on that. And you stood in line and these officers for different divisions. You know, gun raises, mechanics and electricians. They all picked out their crews that they wanted off of the new members that come on. So this guy pointed to me, pointed to go like this. I get out. He says, "I am an officer of the FM division." I said, "Oh," I said, "What's the FM division?" He says, "Fire control." Fire control, main battery.

Well, I didn't know what that meant even. So fire control. I says, well, I don't know what it is. He says, "It's a good division. You'll like it. And it's going to be smart for you. You're gonna get a good education." I said, "Well, that's what I want." So I signed up for it. Well, I says, "Well, what's fire control?" He says, "Fire control is the main battery. That's the 16 inch guns. You're going to learn how to shoot them." I said, "I didn't want that. I wanted to go be a mechanic or a machinist or carpenter or something." But I said, oh geez, the worst thing I'd ever picked if I was going to pick a job. So anyway, I got on that. Well, you'd have to almost have four years experience because you had to be an electrician first class to even find out how them guns fired. They had switchboards with switches, the wall is eight feet high and it was switches all over.

You had to learn what each one was, what it did. And then they put you in the plotting room that was down below. It was four decks down and it was really protected. They had steel around that. Because that was the main battery. They had to have that protected without that, them guns

couldn't fire almost. And inside the turrets, there was nine men inside the turrets. They loaded them guns and they could fire. They had two shells that they could fire out of them guns. One was a high capacity shell and the other one was armor piercing. The armor piercing was six foot, two inches tall, the shell. And, the other one was a high capacity and was about five and a half feet tall. And the armor piercing weighed almost a ton. And the other one weighed three quarters of a ton. Well, they fired the high capacity first. That exploded on contact. As soon as that hit the target, it exploded. So if we were shooting at a ship, they put the high capacity. We had 18 guns on there. We had six forward and we had yeah, three, six, nine guns and they'd load them all with high capacity and they'd fire at the target. Well, when they hit, they blow all the superstructure away. All the top personnel, they raised all the damage. And then the second shot, if they hit with the high capacity first, then they'd use the armor piercing and that had to go through six inches of steel before it exploded.

So that armor piercing who'd go right inside the ship. And then it'd blow. Hell, 10 minutes later, the ship was gone, sunk, you know. And that's how they done that. And the same thing was the armor piercing for the, when we fired at shore batteries. If we were shooting at a big building, we'd use the armor piercing right away because that'll go right inside the building and come down and there'll be nothing left.

And, we had a lot of practice. So, we did sink two Japanese ships. We sunk a Japanese destroyer and we sank a cruiser. When we sunk them two ships, when we got to them, we couldn't even see them. They were over the horizon. You could only see from standing on the main deck, you could only see six miles. That's when the ocean tipped, you know, around. But my battle station was up there right on the top where the radar was. I was a rangefinder operator. I had a rangefinder that was 26 feet long, and I could see 22 miles with that.

And it was great big as well. It was this big around and I sat right in the middle and I had a whole field of diamonds in there. Well, small diamonds all over and one big diamond was right in the middle. And that's how you had the training. First, they'd say, "Well, you want to be a rangefinder operator?" I said, "Well, that's a good start." But when he told me where I had to go, I didn't it. That's the first thing they blow off. These Japanese planes, when they come over, they bombed them. That's the thing that will first fall off of there. They want to get your radar off there. And I said, "Oh, I'm going to last one battle and then I'm going." So anyway, I was up there and holy crimini. I says, "Hey, I ain't got a chance in hell." So anyway, I learned how to be the operator up there.

And that diamond, that one main diamond, you had two knobs that you screwed. And screwed one this way. And that diamond went this way and you screw the other way and it came back. Well, the object was to get that diamond over your target. If we were firing at a target, I could see it. And I get that diamond right over the target. They had a button in the middle of that. They're going to press that button.

Well, that range would go right down into the plotting room and they'd set them guns up and they'd fire up within 30 seconds after I set the mileage down there. And I'd get another one. And then they'd tell me where to go for the next one. I could move that right around in a circle, any place I wanted. So we'd bombard a lot of islands, you know? And, they'd moved from place to place. And I'd get a target and I'd spin that well, if they wanted to shoot that they would. And if they didn't, they'd move it to another target. So that was my job.

And, when we got an air attack, I'd never had nothing to do with an air attack. All I'd do sit there and hold onto a pipe and watch the plains come and drop bombs sometimes. They'd land pretty close. We never did get hit, but we got water. They'd just miss us maybe 30 yards. And when they come out, it was just like Yellowstone geysers. You'd get water all over and they'd come close to hitting us, but they'd never did get us. And I seen a destroyer right behind us get hit and, Jesus, it was sunk with one bomb, hit it. And it was gone. Just tipped right over. Down it went. 300 men died. Right, right now, you know, No survivors.

And then an aircraft carrier that was with us, the Intrepid, it was always onside. We had a task force. They called them task force. They had destroyers all around the outside, it was maybe 30 destroyers. Well, they had torpedoes and they had five inch guns. They were protecting us from submarines, you know, torpedoes.

So if there was a submarine someplace, one of these destroyers would go out and get it. And they'd take care of as much as they could. And inside of that was two light cruisers. Well, they were aircraft cruisers. They had all aircraft firepower for planes, knocking down planes. And then we had guns until you couldn't . . . And we had 52 20 millimeter machine guns. We had 76, 40 millimeter machine guns, and we had 25 inch guns that exploded on time. You know, they like, if they've seen an airplane that was 500 yards, they could sit that thing. Right away and fire and it would explode just when it got to the plane and then knock them down.

And, that's how they shot them. And that five inch, they were good for three miles and, uh, each ship had its own color on them. When them shells exploded. They had a powder in the color, a bright color. Our color was orange. So if we missed it, we see the orange. We see that was our shell. And we could tell whether we hit our target or not.

[01:11:36]

And the 16 inch guns were the same way. We had orange. When that exploded, we could tell. Well, they knew when they hit, but what they missed, we had two planes that were observation planes. And when we were in a battle, they'd send them two planes up. They were seaplanes. They had pontoons underneath to land with. They'd send them up. And if we missed, like we were shooting at land targets, he tells us exactly where that landed and how far away it was. And they'd make that correction in 15 seconds and they'd fire another one. That's how fast they could do that. They fired them every 30 seconds if they had to, if they really got a lot. And when them 16 inch went off at the same time, that ship was 300, almost 400 feet long. And it weighed, I forget what the weight was, but anyway, it moved that ship about 10 feet over the ocean. You go like this, it'll go over 10 feet and then it'll go.

And that's how, you could just see it. And I didn't know about that when it first went off, I was loading machine guns then, hauling these pallets of machine gun bullets. And we were packing them out to the guns and I'd pack them up. And one of them five inch went off right in front of me and the 16 inch went off at the same time. It almost tore the clothes right off of me. That the concussion, And boy, they tell you don't be out there when them guns go off. The gunners mates, they're all strapped in their guns. They're strapped in so they can't get blown out. And the rest of the guys, they're not there or they got a shield around them. And when they fired them guns, they just ducked down. Well, I come out with nothing but a handful of them shells. The shells went in the air and I went flying. I almost broke my back. It threw me right against the wall plates, you know? And, uh, I learned my lesson there. 'Cause when them guns go off, you get the heck out of

there. And the sixteens, you better get out of there, they'd blow you right off of the ship. So anyway, we'd have to just hope you didn't get hit with a bomb.

But anyway, this aircraft carrier, the Intrepid. That was next to us. And it was about 400 yards off the port side, off the left side. And that, a kamikaze hit it. That's when it got the kamikazes. When I first got in, they were dropping just bombs. They had to hit you with a bomb because there wasn't no kamikazes. The kamikazes started about six months after I was on the ship. And that's suicide bombers. They crash the plane to make the hit. Well these planes were coming down and they were hard to hit sometimes. All them guns are shooting at them, but when they pick a target, like the aircraft carriers, they wanted to get them so them planes couldn't take off. So they'd come after the aircraft carriers.

They'd come down and everybody's shooting at them that can shoot at them. And pretty soon they explode up in the air. Well, this one come down and he was on fire. Burning like you couldn't believe. And they come down and he hit right in the middle of the aircraft carrier. Right in. And you could see planes and bodies flying all over. And two minutes later, another one come down and they just put six planes out of the hangar deck. They brought them up out of the ship and they were just getting ready to move them out. And this kamikaze hit and them six planes were loaded with gas, loaded with bombs, and they all went off. So you could see the explosion that was caused.

Well, anyway, it ended up, they lost, I guess, about 700 men got killed and I was up in my crow's nest up there and I was watching everything through my rangefinder. I could see them just like it was from me to you, you know? And I see the bodies flying up, pieces, legs, arms going up. And that thing went out of control. The ship went out of control. And I guess a lot of them got smashed where they were running it from. And it turned and it turned right in front of us. And we were trying to turn away from it. And it kept coming this way and we were coming this way and we missed it. I'll bet you not five feet. We just missed hitting it. And that thing was on fire, burning. The bodies were still flying off of it. You couldn't believe it.

And that battle went on for, it started at nine o'clock in the morning. I went to church, we had a mass on there. We had a Catholic priest and every Sunday, if it was quiet, we had a mass and Protestants had one too, you know, and we were a church. It was about 110 degrees, not a cloud in the sky. And pretty soon this Japanese flew over. And I said, that's a Japanese airplane. It was only about 400 feet in the air. And pretty soon there's our plane right behind it shooting at it with his machine gun. Well, he did it and we seen it crash. And I said, You never see that. They never leave a Japanese plane get in there because we get an air command that's flying around our task force all around, keeping them Jap planes away from our carriers. But anyway, this one got in there and he didn't get to drop a bomb.

That US plane shot him down. Well, 10 minutes later they rang the battle sound. The trumpet went off. I can't tell you the sound of it, but anyway, when that blows, everybody runs to their battle station as quick as they can get there. Well, everybody went to their battle stations and the air was full of Japanese planes. I think they said there was 400 Japanese planes that got in there. And we got four or five of our planes in there. Well, we shot one of our own planes down. It come down low on the water and them they'd shoot anything. And our planes ain't supposed to be in there. They're only supposed to intercept an outsider. When they get inside, they're supposed to let them come. That's what we're there for. Battleships and the destroyers and the anti-aircraft cruisers. Well, anyway, they come in there. And we shot them down. Our planes

were shot down too. We shot one down, but some of the other ships shot them down too. You're not looking for insignia or anything else. You're looking for their planes with the bombs.

And some of them were coming down on fire when they got hit and then they were shooting at all the planes. And you can't believe it. We were in that from eight o'clock in the morning, till four o'clock in the afternoon. Wave after wave of Japanese planes kept coming in there. We shot them down. They go out, come back in. We kept going all day. Well, they shot, they hit the two aircraft carriers and they killed, I think, geez, I don't know how many men. They killed 6 or 700 on the Intrepid and the other one was the Hancock. They killed, I don't know how many men on that. But they got hit with a couple of bombs. They didn't get hit with the kamikaze, but they did get hit with a couple of bombs. And I don't know how many men, the whole task force lost. Because them destroyers. They'd hit them destroyers with bombs. And they'd sink. They hit it with a kamikaze and they'd break right in half, you know, because they're only 40 feet wide.

But it took eight hours, we were in that battle. Never stopped. And that was the worst battle we were in. And that was the Mariana battle. They called it the Mariana. Uh, they got a name for it too, but, uh, anyway, that was one of the worst battles.

We went in and bombarded these islands before the Marines would go in there to get them. We'd bombard them, maybe for like the Marshall Islands, we bombarded them islands maybe every day for a week. And we shot a lot of shots over there. They do a lot of destruction and then they figured they got to the biggest part of the shore batteries taken out. Then they send the Marines in and boy, you don't know how they dug foxholes and they get in there. And Saipan, they were still millions of Japanese on there alive. And we swear, we bombarded every inch of that Island. The islands, the mountains were big. In fact, after the war was over, 10 years after, they still found Japanese hiding in caves that were in there that didn't think the war was over yet. Yeah, it was interesting.

Grant: What's the range on a 16-inch gun?

Loushin: Oh, they can hit a target 20 miles. Yeah. We sunk a destroyer, but couldn't even see. But, the land, well, there were high mountains. Like the mountains we got right here. So we can be 10 miles away from them and still see the mountains, you know, so we fired away from them, but we had planes up there telling us where the targets were and we'd set according to the planes. They'd give us the height and width and how big they were. They'd give us all the readings and they'd set up. They could fire them big 16 inch guns every 30 seconds. They could fire nine shells. Yeah.

Grant: People often talk about Butte's contribution to World War Two. Were you thinking of the Butte mines while you were over there?

Loushin: Oh yeah, they asked me about the mines. I says, I got two brothers. I had one brother that got drafted. He went in the army. He was in the army for a while. One of his kidneys went haywire and they wouldn't keep him. They got him out of there, but, uh, he never got in where the action was. He was just getting shipped over there, but they said, no, they can't. They weren't short of men then. But they got him out of there. He was in there about a year and they sent him out. But my other brother worked in the mines and he wanted to go in there, but he was a contract miner and that's who they wanted, you know, they needed the copper. So they wouldn't, they said quit asking because you ain't going to go. You're not going, no. They wouldn't even let

him quit. He said, "Well, I can quit, can't I?" They said, "No, you can't quit either." So they kept him. Well, he wasn't too stuck on going because they had a family anyway, you know, but he wanted to go.

Grant: What about PTSD, Louie? Do you ever have that? A lot of people come back from Vietnam, PTSD. You heard of that? You ever experienced that?

Loushin: No, no. That I was out. Too old to go in there.

Grant: No, no. I mean, with what they call post-traumatic stress disorder.

Loushin: Oh yeah. Yeah. We had guys, we had guys on board, our ship that got that and they had to take them off. Well, we had two guys come on our ship. One got to be one of my best friends. He was on the destroyer and he couldn't stand the small ship because they bounced. They were all over. I mean, he got so sick. He was wishing, he prayed he could die. That's how sick he was. After the war was over, I had to stay in the reserves. I had to stay four years after the war was over, they could call me in a minute.

Well, they made me go, they called me back. I was home for about six months. They call me back, put me on a destroyer. And they wanted us for guides on the ship. You know, they had all these high school kids on there that were going into the Navy and they wanted them to break in, in neutral waters, you know? So they had maybe a hundred veterans that was in the war on that destroyer teaching other kids how to do things, you know? And, uh, anyway, they were all gung ho and they were pretending that there was a war, you know, and they had to shoot the guns. They'd ring battle stations. Everybody goes to the battle stations.

Well, everything was good for two or three days. But after we got out on the ocean and we were out in the rough waters, that ship start going, like it's supposed to go up and down this way, then go side to side. And you swear it's gonna tip over, you know, you can just feel yourself and you're hanging on and it goes the other way. And then it goes to the other way, then it starts pitching this way. And, uh, they got so seasick. Well, I used to go down and eat down below where the mess halls were. Well, when I got down there, there was these kids down there. They'd have these plates, they'd have their food in them. They'd throw up right in the plates. They'd be sick. We had tables this long, all these trays, and they were throwing up in the trays. And I couldn't go, I ate right up above. I get my plate. I just go outside and eat. I wouldn't go in there. And sometimes they'd make it to the garbage cans. We had the garbage cans down there, but they wouldn't make it to them. They'd just fall on the floor and roll on the floor and they'd have to pick them up and take them up to get fresh air.

And then I got stuck. A lot of times I'd have to do the watches. We have watches every four hours, you know, and they couldn't, they were too sick. They'd be in there watching, they would be passed out, laying on the ground. They didn't care if the ship sunk. In fact, they hoped that it would sink. So that was a tough four weeks. We was on there four weeks like that. And none of them got well. Some of them did. They could maybe stand it, but, uh, everybody would have to eat. We'd have to bring their dinners up to them where they could eat out in the fresh air. They'd stand by the fly lines and come over there and eat and then throw up. Eat, throw up. Oh, Jesus. Yeah, it was tough.

[01:27:15]

Grant: I wanted to come back to Butte and being at home. I wanted to ask a bit more about the mill in Rocker. I hadn't heard a lot about that. What was its capacity? What was it like out there?

Loushin: Well, they made all the timber for the mines and there was a big crew out there and they had a railroad there that brought her right into the mines and they made all the caps, the nine foot posts, this big around and nine feet high. We had to take the bark off of them because they didn't want them in the copper water. The bark could get in and eat that bark off of there. And, they put them in there. They had a big tank and it would hold, they had carts about as big as this table and they put these posts on there and this timber. Then they'd put them in this tank and they had to seal this tank and put this solution in there that would go in this wood. They'd keep it in there all day and then get it out. And then that wood would last forever. It'll go in and just make it water safe, you know, and all this copper water wouldn't get in there and rot the timber. So they just do that, make the timber last for years. And they'd get all this.

That's what we'd have to do. We'd have to do. We had these bark rippers. They had two handles and a blade in the middle. They'd put these logs on these big posts that we'd have to turn and turn it over until we get all the bark off. And that was a job. That was a hard job. You had a boss standing right there and he wouldn't let you alone. You'd get one. Right. Did you take it off and throw it off? And they took it on this track and throw it in this thing, they'd bring in another one. Jesus. My arms were ready to fall off when I got home. So that's all I'd done for a year, raking them logs. And they had caps and posts and lumber and all the lumber would come in there to Rocker and they'd ship it all back to the mines. The mines would order it and they'd bring it back. So that was a 24 hour deal, but Rocker only worked day shift. Like when I was there doing that, they didn't have it lit up there. We could only work the dayshift, but they had so many of them doing it.

Grant: I saw a picture recently at the smelter of them putting these big posts in with the molten copper as part of the finishing process. I thought that was very interesting. Did you ever go to the smelter?

Loushin: No. No, I never did go to the smelter,

Grant: I guess they used a lot of timber out there too.

Loushin: Oh yeah, they used a lot of timber out there. Yeah. They'd get the timber on these freight cars and they'd be about 60, 70 feet long. There'd be about this big on one end this big on the other end. And the guy that was on that big end, the little end was easy to roll. The big end, you had to work like heck and the little end would get ahead of you. And then you'd have to pull that little end back to match up the big end. Oh, I worked with one guy. He was on the big end. And you got to pick and they call them Ryebe picks.

You got a sharp end on one end and a spade on the other end. And that sharp end that's what you kept pushing the timber with. And this guy was pushing it and he couldn't get it out after he put it in and push it. And then it rolled off of the skid aways and he couldn't pull it back on and he was trying to get it back on. Pretty soon that pick went into the air and he says, blank, blank, blank, with this place and away, he went, he walked all the way home, back to Butte, five miles. Well, I had about 15 guys quit like that. And, uh, that's how disgusted they got with that job. You know, that was a job. I know the first week I had it, I was so tired. I never even changed clothes. I went in and flopped on the couch. Dirty clothes on, my mother couldn't even wake me up. Get me off

the couch. I was like that for a week before I could finally change clothes. Oh, that was a nightmare. But then when you got used to it, you were in good shape. Oh, sure. Yeah.

Grant: Who needs a gym?

Loushin: Yeah, that's what they tell me. They say a couple more days. You'll be fine. You'll be fine. You'll be able to wash your face.

Grant: In the mines, where did the hoisting engineer fit in the hierarchy?

[01:32:22]

Loushin: You had a chair just like this, even more comfortable than this, overstuffed. And you sat there and you had your controls right in front of you. You'd run it right from that chair. Everything was there. You had your throttle and your brake. If you run a double drum engine, you had two brakes, one on each side and you have the throttle in the middle. And, you had your clutches on both sides, just so you could clutch them out and run them single, if you wanted, or you could run them counterbalance when you pulled over, you run them counterbalance. One guy could go up and one guy go down and you could clutch one out and run them single, you know? And, uh, the chippies were just one drum.

That was just a single drum and each one had four decks on it. And there were seven men to a deck, except when the Kelly came, when the Kelly came, it come with two brand new electric engines and they were powerful. The number one was 14 tons, and the other one was 12 tons and the rest of them were six to eight tons. So there was quite a difference there. Yeah. And, uh, they would hold 16 tons and they were nice engines. Brand new and easy to run, just like a sewing machine.

And the other engines were tough. They had throttles on them. It took two men and a boy to pull the throttle sometimes on them, they were so heavy. And the brakes. But I liked to run the air engines the best. They were most fun. They made a lot of noise to run. They ran, you know, the engines, electric engines were quiet, just, uh, the generators were noisy, but they were downstairs, but them air engines were noisy. You couldn't hear nothing. Your oiler would sit with you in a chair beside you. And he had to holler in your ears to hear what he was saying. You'd have to holler in his ear to tell him, to talk him back.

Grant: Between the 16 inch guns and the air engines. I can see why you need a hearing aid.

Loushin: You know I never had to have them. Yeah. The bells that they rang in the engine rooms were loud and we had three different sounding bells. You had a surface bell. That was the loudest. Then you had a station bell that they rang down the mine on the stations. Then you had a shaft bell that was rung any place in the shaft because when they were repairing in the shaft, they had to have a line, you know. So they had three sets of bells. The surface bell was the loudest that didn't have no cushions behind it. That was as loud as a bell can be.

The station bells, they had a cushion behind them. That made it a little bit duller, but it was a different sound. You didn't have them the same. They were really different from each other. And the station bell, they were loud. And the shaft bell was just a dead bell - ding, ding. But you didn't have to have that loud because that was rung just every once in a while. They'd be working and you might not ring it for half an hour. And, the shaft bell, that was rung every place. And that was a dull bell. But them other bells, boy, they were loud. In fact, if your oiler was talking to

you and they rang the bells, until you knew how the bells rang, you'd have to shut up when the bells are ringing, you know, you're trying to count the bells, but once you learned how I could call talk to both of you and they could ring the bell and I just automatically go with the engine. I didn't even have to listen to the bell. I knew exactly what they rang.

Grant: Could people come up and bug you while you're in the chair.

Loushin: Well, there was a law there. They didn't want you up there. You know, you could come in, we had a visitor's time from one o'clock in the afternoon till three o'clock they had visitors, they had a guide, come in, show you all the engine parts and stuff, but, uh, they'd never let you come on. But like, if I was oiling, I could bring you in there, you know, like some night I could take you in and take you up and show you around. They did that. But in the daytime they wouldn't let you come up. They didn't want you to be distracted from anything, you know, they wanted to make sure you were by yourself and you got the signal.

Grant: We've heard a little bit about the rope gangs. What about those guys?

Loushin: Well, they changed the cable. They come in every morning at eight o'clock before you lowered the shift and they'd climb on top of them drums with a hammer and a chisel. And they'd go on the drums and you'd move real slow so they could walk on top of them drums and they checked that cable to make sure there's no broken parts of that cable. They checked that check cable all the way down. And every day, every morning they'd come in. Like they couldn't do it all. They'd only have maybe 45 minutes or an hour to check the cable. So they check maybe 300, 400 feet. Then they'd have to get off.

And the next day you'd start there and they were down another three, 400 feet till they got to the bottom and then they'd start, there'd be two men on each cable. And that way they'd look at the cable and make sure it was, you know, and if there was a broken strand, they'd snip it off. So it wouldn't go farther and then they'd watch that they'd marked that. And if it was getting any worse, then they'd change the cable. It usually breaks the first hundred feet from where the clamp is, it hooks onto the deck. And then when it gets bad, where them strands break, they'd clip them off and they kept tar on them cables. They tarred them once a week, they poured that tar on them. So the copper water couldn't get in there and eat them cables. So, maybe every month the brakes got too bad then they unhooked the cable and they'd cut that part off. They'd cut. Maybe 30 feet from the end of the cable. They'd cut that off and then they'd hook it up again. You'd have a whole new cable. That's what wore mostly because it went over the shiv wheel all the time, that's where it got the beating mostly. They'd cut that cable when it loosened.

And when the cable got bad, it got too short. They always had an extra 500 feet of cable on that, on that drum, because they didn't want to run it to the end because something ever got loose or broke, the whole cable would go down the shaft. So they used to have at least 500 feet of cable. And when they got down to that area, then they'd take that cable off and put a new one on. Now I worked up at the Steward and I was there the day they changed the cable and put a new cable on and they never did have to put a new cable on. I was there for eight years. Yeah. I was there for 16 years. I was on the Steward and I never did leave there and they never did change the cable, but they cut it a lot of times, you know, but it was always just and that cable is still on there. But I've been at places where they cut the cables too, put new ones on.

They got too short and put new ones on and then they'd use the ones they took off. Like if they took the one off at the Steward, they'd put it on a mine that was only maybe 3000 feet deep. They'd put it there and it served, but they use them and they had, they checked them cables. They'd send them back East where they made them and they'd test them every so often and see what the breaking strain was.

And the most them cables ever had was the skip weighed 16 tons, loaded and maybe you could add maybe 20 tons all together. And then they take it over for a break and strain to see how much it'd take to break one. And they take them over to test them and it'd take maybe 50, 60 tons to break. So they were always good, no matter what shape they were in, they tested them regular to make sure they never break. And, uh, one broke at the Emma mine. Now that was a steam hoist, and that was a flat cable. They made them cables here in Butte. They were flat. They were about 14, 15 inches wide. They were about an inch thick. And, I worked at the Emma too, but I wasn't working there very long, maybe six months. And they were lowering timber at about two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock in the morning when the shift comes up, there's no men down in the mine and that's when they lower timber. They only had that one engine there.

And, they were lowering timber and they had a timber load on there going down, and it was about two o'clock in the morning. And they got to about the four or 500 going down and the cable busted. Well, that cable broke. It had four decks of timber on it. And it went down and that bottom deck, when they picked that out of there, he says you could put it in your lunch bucket. That's how it splattered down there. Well, they called me up at four o'clock in the morning to come up there to pull that wreck out. Well, they had an engine down there by the shaft that would go in that shaft. They had decks to put on that, to go down there to dig it deeper. So they got that deck out and I had to go down there and run that engine so they could get down there and pull that wreck out.

So we pulled that out and you cannot believe the decks, how they smashed, they were just pulverized. So if anybody was on it, they'd never had a chance. So that's what everybody was scared of - a cable breaking, but you didn't have to worry too much because they had a set of dogs. They called them dogs on every deck. It was a system that was on top of the deck underneath the plate, you know, and any slack on that cable would make them dogs go out. They had teeth on them just like this, big teeth. And they were about this long and they'd hook into the guides. The guides were all wood. So when you put slack on that cable, they'd spring and go and hook into the wood and it holds the decks. Yeah.

So if you're going down and the cable broke, you'd have slack cables. So them dogs would go right in and stop. Well, if you never left. But at the Emma, when that cable broke, all that weight was there. And before the dogs had a chance to go in there, get in, but there was so much weight on it. Then they were already gone down that and the dogs just pulled out of the wood and went to the bottom.

But like if you were coming up and it broke, you'd have slack cable, they'd go in there and it held, it holds the decks. That was the only chance you had. But very seldom, I don't know of any of them that ever done that, you know, came out.

Grant: Do you have to change out the chippy and the skip? Are they always on? How does that work?

Loushin: The machinists come and check them decks every day to make sure there's nothing broke on them like the latches or something. They check them right from top to bottom, they bring them down and they looked and pound on the gates to see the gates closed right. And they checked them all every morning before the men got on them to go down.

Grant: Are they all on the same cable?

Loushin: Yeah, they're all on the same cable. w

Grant: And the skips are above.

Loushin: And you can see the skips. You can go over to the Steward. You can see the skips hanging in there. Well, that's what they did. They come up and take the decks off and moved them to the side. They all worked on pulleys up there in the gallows frame. They moved the skips over and hook onto them and then bring them drop down the shafts. Yeah. And they checked the skips before they put down because they did move men up and down with one deck, you know, they had the one deck and a skip. And if somebody wanted to ride, a boss wanted to ride, the guys that are pulling rock would stop and pick him up and take him someplace where he wanted to go. We did do that all the time.

Grant: A man could ride a skip?

Loushin: Well, not the skip, we wouldn't lower, no men or we'd move the bosses. Men with authority, we'd moved them. They'd call me on the mine phone and say, "Louie, this is so-and-so I'm on the 1200. Would you pick me up? Going up? I got to go up." So I'd say yes. I'd go up there and I come to the 1200 and I go slow. And he'd give me a stop bell, stop and get on and give me three bills to the surface. I dropped them off at surface and then go about our business.

Grant: I was curious what you recall about the Alice Pit and when that got started.

Loushin: Now, see, I don't know much about the Alice pit. I went up there and watched them, but I don't know too much about the Alice pit. They never pushed that too much. I couldn't tell you nothing about the Alice. I never did go up there when it was working, but like I say, I was down in the big one because I worked there for about a year off and on.

Grant: And what about uptown Butte? Say in the 1950s, can you describe it?

Loushin: 1950s? Yeah. It was a good town. Yeah, lots of good times. I was old enough to go into bars, but I never hit that too much with the job I had. You know, they didn't want you to be drinking. On your day off you could have a few if you wanted them, but that's the first thing they asked you. And we had to take a physical every year on our birthday. So you had to be up to snuff. If there was anything wrong with your heart, you were gone. So that's why I'm still here because they kept my heart in good shape.

Grant: Did you have any favorite places to go shop or entertainment?

Loushin: Entertainment? Well, they had a lot of good entertainments. My father-in-law's was…well that was a good one. Neighborhood bar. That was one of the best neighborhood bars, you know? You knew everybody that'd come in there. And, we used to go up to Western Tavern that was on East Park Street and that was good. Saturday nights, they all had orchestras in them and the Top Hat down in Meaderville. We went down there and the Arrow, they all had music.

And, we went uptown to the us, can't think of the name, but we went up there dancing. It was upstairs. Sometimes I seen a guy go flying down the stairs where the bouncer threw him down the stairs and it was about 80 steps to go up there and they'd hit every step going down. If you caused any ruckus, that's where you ended up, down the stairs. But there wasn't too much of that either. They had these bouncers and you'd behave. You never seen too many fights. If you had any fights, they always went outside and went down an alley someplace, settled them, you know? Yeah.

Grant: And what about Butte now? How does it compare?

Loushin: Well, it's nothing like it was, it's nothing. I mean, it's. Well, there's bars around you go in them, but sometimes you don't know nobody. You don't know nobody but somebody that you might go in there with, but sometimes, you know, somebody, but like, uh, the school of mines up there, they got their own places to go. They hang out in different places. But, when I got older, I didn't go into the bars anyway. Because, uh, they weren't like they were in the old days, you went to these neighborhood bars and you bought two drinks and you got one free. Yeah. And, uh, they were 10 cent glasses of beer. You got the first, sometimes you got the third one, fourth one free. All depends on how good the mood the bartender was in.

And that's where you hung out in them days. And, all the neighborhood bars were like that. You buy two, you got one free. But then after that, when the neighborhood bars got out, when somebody else got in, well, the beer prices went up and whiskey prices went up. Then the prices went up and then they cut out the free ones. You could buy 30 now and you never get a free one. And now they're three and $4 a drink. And you can't afford to go. You can have a couple of drinks, but if you go in there and you see three or four of your friends and you buy a round, if you've got $20 bill to spend, it's gone on the first drink. If they don't buy you one back, you got to go home.

Grant: Exactly.

Jaap: You've got to take out a small loan now

Grant: In this era of cleanup for Butte. You know, what do you think that EPA has done for Butte? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Loushin: Well, I think they're doing a good job. They're tearing down a lot of buildings. They're tearing down a bunch of fire traps for houses, especially on Colorado street. There's a lot of brand new houses there now, and they're getting rid of all of the fire traps and getting rid of them. I think they're moving pretty good. They could probably move a little faster, but, uh, I think they're doing a good job.

Grant: Like I said, we met when they were turning the Steward back on. How did it make you feel to see it running again after all those years of it being quiet?

Loushin: It's nice to see them running. Yeah. Yeah. I'd like to see the mines run again one day. But I was one of the last engineers to run at the Steward and they sent in a bunch of Canadian brass down to check the copper content before they shut it down. And I got to know the guys, it was about 20 or 30 of them. And they come to the Steward every day and they'd come up to eat lunch, their buckets. And he'd come in the engine room and I got to know them. And I talked to them and they were telling me about the ore content. And, uh, they started on the 3,400 and they

were supposed to go down as far as the 4,000 foot level and test some of the places to see where all the ore was that they left down there and they were on the 3,400 for about two months. And he says, "Well, we still ain't got it all. But we're going to move down to the 3,600." They'd go down there and test that for a while and move down to the 3800. And when they'd come in, they talked to me and I'd ask them questions, you know. And he says, "They're never going to get that ore out of the 3,400 and 3,600, there is so much of it down there. He says, you can't believe it. He says, I'd say there's another 50 years of mining here, right here at the Steward. There's ore down there. And he says, we're never going to get to the 37, 38, 39 to test that.

Grant: How much is down there?

Loushin: He said, a lot of times there's more deeper the deeper you go. But there's enough on the 34 to 36, he says to last, I don't know how many years, he says. But he says there are some strong leads going in there.

Grant: Wow.

Loushin: And, uh, I said, well, that's good. But the reason why they said they stopped mining is because it was getting too expensive to hoist that. It's so deep. Like the Mountain Con, they had two sets of hoists. They had an electric hoist on the 3,800 at the Con, or the 4,000 foot level. And they had ore at the 56, 59. That engine that was on the 4,000 foot level, it would hoist it up and dump it in the 4,200. And then the surface engine would pick it up from there. But that got too expensive. The deeper they got, the more expensive it was to move it. So they said they had to quit it because it was too expensive. And the engines on the hoist on the surface couldn't pull it up from way down below. It was too hard on the engine, you know, burn them up. It'd burn them generators right up. So that was the reason for doing that.

Grant: It's all under water now.

Loushin: Yeah. Yeah. It's all under water now. Yeah.

Grant: What did you think when you heard that they turned the pumps off?

Loushin: Well, that was the final time. You knew then. Once they loaded them full of water, but they could get that water out of there pretty fast. In fact, I seen some of the stations. I went down the mine, run some of them engines, and I went, some of them levels that were underwater for years. And you ought to see that timber in there. The timber in those drifts, they call them, and they had solid timber going in there. Posts. And the guy took his axe, the boss took a chunk of that timber out. Brand new wood. That copper water come in there and just purified that. Made metal out of it almost. So they know now that this copper water preserved this. So you could open any station or any level from the thousand foot down that's underwater. He said we can open any one of them starting tomorrow. He says all that timber would be intact. Just pump the water out and go to work. Yeah. He showed me in four or five different places, take a chop out. And that wood was just brand new. No rust, no rot, no nothing.

Grant: Maybe one day. I just have one more question for you, Louis. Thanks for all your time today. You are a part of a group that meets, right. Do you guys meet at the VFW, a group of miners? Could you tell us about that group?

Loushin: Well, we started that group. We had close to 500 members. Now that was a lot of members. We used to have them up at the Blaine school in the auditorium and we filled that

auditorium. They'd always have a lunch, some kind of a lunch, and sometimes they'd have beer. Sometimes they wouldn't, but they'd always have pop and stuff, you know? And, we'd have a meeting every month, once a month. It would be in the paper when they had the meetings, but they try to have them the same day and same time of the week. And, uh, now we had them started up there, but the Blaine school raised the rent. Well, we lost a lot of the old timers that died. You know, you're getting older every year, every year, five or 10 of them would die. They're up in their eighties. And, they raised the prices of the rent. So they said they couldn't keep it up anymore because we only paid $20 a month and they had parties. They wanted parties for all the members every year.

They had a Christmas party and a big picnic every year. And boy, that Christmas party was something. They hired a five piece orchestra. We rented the upstairs in the Elks and drinks were free. You could have anything you wanted to drink and if you ordered a drink and they didn't have it. They'd send somebody out to get a bottle of it. That's how good they were. And they had a first-class catered meal and we were open as long as there was at least five or 10 members in there. They never closed it until they were gone. There was no closing time, but by that time, everybody was filled up with eats or filled up with booze. They were out of there by three o'clock, but it was a good party. And then they had a picnic. And they had that in the summertime. And that was the same thing. All free drinks and had a picnic any place they could have one and that went over big. And now we had from close to 600 people, I guess and now we've got for a total, we have it down at the country club.

There's 35 people now, 35 members. And the most we get down there's about 15, 16. We have that every month on a Thursday or Friday and they have a free meal. We have a free meal at the country club. And, they give you a pop with your meal, but there's no more free beer. They can't afford it. So everybody, we pay $40 a month now. And then we used to get, uh, we only had to pay $20 and that was for all the parties we had which was cheap, I'll tell you. So everybody was happy to pay that $20 and the company put in, I think they put in a hundred dollars a month. And that saved the big party, the big drinking party, you know, we had a lot of money. Jeez. We had raffles up there and everything that the company paid for. But when this guy took over, he quit everything.

He refused to pay that and they went up there to committee, went up there, fought with them, argued with him, and talked nice to him. He says, no, you ain't get nothing from me. He said, I ain't giving nothing. And he still don't give nothing. So nobody gives nothing. So we had to pay $40 dues. So we could have the little party we have every Thursday or every Friday, first of the month. So then they have a meeting, but every year we lose two or three guys. Like I'm 93 years old now. And I'm one of the oldest. But there's guys just four or five years younger than me, which isn't very far. So we can't get these young guys to . . . everybody that worked for the Anaconda Company now, regardless of age can join us, but these young guys are working and we have that meeting in the morning and nobody can come, so they don't join and they wouldn't join anyway because it's for old people now, you know.

Grant: What's the name of the group?

Loushin: Retirees, they call them Miners Retirees. We used to call it the Anaconda Retirees, but then when this guy wouldn't give us no money, wouldn't donate nothing, they took his Anaconda off and we got our own name. They said, we're not going to advertise him. And he still won't give us nothing. They go up every once in a while. He still won't crack. And I don't know why.

The company, they gave everything. At Christmas time, they threw in extra dollars to have a party. What a party that was. Yeah, but he stopped everything. So now we ain't got nothing. I suppose, a couple of more years, there won't be anybody. There won't be enough left to have a meeting. We got barely enough now to have a Christmas party at the end of the year and they still have a picnic, but they have the picnic right down there. They just break out a couple of stoves and cook steaks and have them right out there. Clark's Park or someplace. So that's about all they do now. And I don't know how long that's gonna last. We had 50 here, I think about a year ago. Now it's down to 35 and I suppose the next year probably be down to 20, 25. We lost two already this year. And like I say, I'm 93 and there's a lot of them right below me a couple of years. So a lot of us are going to say goodbye pretty quick. So that's about all I can tell you.

Jaap: Thank you.

Loushin: Anytime you need some information, you can give me a call. I had a sign and I was going to bring it up and give it to you. Maybe you got one. It's a list of all the Anaconda Company from 1932, all the jobs they had and their wages, and they were day or weekly wages. And it will surprise you. And I'll give that to you. I was going to bring it up and I got halfway up here and I thought, Oh, I forgot that pay list. You know, I said, maybe they'd be glad to have that. So I'll tell you, I'll bring that out and I'll see. You know, uh, Hoffman? Well, I gave him one. How could I give this to you? Give it to him to give you?

Jaap: Yeah. Larry comes up often.

Loushin: Are you up here? I'll bring it up here. And, I got a price of the wages that they gave and you'd be surprised. A boss, engineers like me, we got $5 and 50 cents a day for eight hours. And the boss, he could be bossing 500 men. He got $5.50, the same as me, $5 and 50 cents a day. Yeah. And the bosses, the foremen, you'd be surprised what they got. Well, all the prices are down there and I'll get you one of them. And I got one, I think, all the prices now what they were getting, you know, it's pretty close, but it's a different spread. It's the prices of everybody that worked for the Anaconda Company, their prices are on there.

But then I got another one with the jobs and different things. I'll give you that one too. I'll give you what I got anyway. So I'll bring it up and give it to you. Your name is?

Jaap: Aubrey.

Loushin: Okay. In fact, I might bring it up tomorrow or Saturday. I'll bring it up Monday. Maybe I might get a chance to, I might bring it up today. How long are you up here?

Jaap: Five.

Loushin: Okay. Well, if my wife ain't got too much for me to do, I'll bring it up, but if she has, I'll bring it up Monday or Tuesday and I'll look for it and I'll bring you anything I got that I think maybe you'd like to have.

Jaap: Please do. Alright, Louis, thank you for your time today. Do you have anyone else you think we should talk to?

Loushin: Well, I don't know. You got everything off of Hoffman, I guess.

Jaap: Clark did, yeah.

Grant: Talked to him for a couple hours. Maybe Tom Holter. Isn't he a member?

Loushin: Oh Tom Holter. Yeah, you can get him up here. He'd tell you about the cables. You know, he could tell you the cables, how they changed them, how often they changed them and how they changed them.

Grant: He was in a rope gang wasn't he?

Loushin: Yeah. He was on the rope gang. Yeah. For years. Yeah. I know Tommy real well, I grew up with him. Yeah. Tommy could help you. And suppose the electrician, if you wanted to know what they had to go through, they'd come up and give you some information.

Grant: Did you ever know George Marinovich?

Loushin: Yeah, but I didn't know him. I knew who he was, but I didn't. Is he still around?

Grant: He is. He was an electrician.

Loushin: Yeah. Well you could call him. I think the one I knew, um, I think he died. I'm not sure, but uh, you could call Marinovich and see if he could let you all know how they used to have to go around to all the engine rooms and how they had to work. We had an electrician that was assigned to us, but they're all dead. And he'd come to all the engine rooms. Because they did special jobs on lots of the equipment. That they had to check. And the machinist was the same way. We had a special machinist. Tommy Jones was our machinist and he's dead. He went to every engine room every day. If you had any trouble, something was wrong, called him. And he came right up and fixed it. Yeah. But there's a machinist. I'll find out, if there's a machinist around that knew anything about the hoists.

Grant: That'd be great.

Loushin: But electricians. The hoists, they had a different job than electrician, but I mean, electricity is electricity, right. They had the generators that they had to take care of and the bell system. They had to even go down the mine if there was a bobber that went haywire. They had to go down and change them bobbers, you know? They could tell you a story, I suppose. Well, anything that you think I could help with, I'd be glad to do it. And don't waste time because time for me is running short maybe.

Grant: Sure hope not.

Loushin: OK, we'll see you.

[END OF RECORDING]