

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Crucible Steel Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 1144

ROBERT EDGELL, JR.

Interviewed

by

Mark Twyford

on

March 26, 1988

Robert Edgell, Jr.

Robert "Bob" Edgell, Jr., the son of Robert and Hazel Edgell, was born November 10, 1928, in East Liverpool, Ohio. He attended East Liverpool Public School through the eighth grade and at age seventeen he enlisted in the United States Army.

Following his discharge from the Army in 1948, Edgell spent several years working at various jobs up and down the western coast of the United States. In 1956, Edgell reenlisted in the Army and served until 1959.

In 1960, Edgell was hired by the Crucible Steel Company located in Midland, Pennsylvania. He spent most of the next twenty-two years working as a brakeman and conductor. Edgell was permanently laid-off from the mill in 1982.

Edgell and his wife Hanna still reside in East Liverpool. Since 1984, Edgell has been employed at Carriage Hill Food in Salem, Ohio.

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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT EDGELL, JR.

INTERVIEWER: Mark Twyford

SUBJECT: Crucible Steel, brakemen, conductor, yard
job

DATE: March 26, 1988

T: This is an interview with Robert Edgell for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Crucible Steel Project, by Mark Twyford, in East Liverpool, Ohio, on March 26, 1988, at 2:00 p.m.

I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today. I would like to start out with a little bit of background information about you. I see you were born in East Liverpool. What part of East Liverpool did you grow up in?

E: I was born in the east end of East Liverpool. We lived up here about nine years and then we moved to the downtown area.

T: What was the east end like during the time you were growing up?

E: Well, when I was growing up it was just like a little city in itself. We were a small community and real nice.

T: That was during the Depression, was it pretty tough for your family?

E: Yes, my father didn't have much work and I think he worked WPA to keep things going.

T: Then you moved to the downtown area. Did you like that

move?

E: Well, no. When you are young you never like to move from one district to the other but we adapted pretty good. So, it wasn't too bad.

T: Did you have a special subject you liked in school?

E: Mostly at the time I think I was more interested in geography and a little bit of history. That is about it.

T: So, you wanted to travel?

E: Oh, yes.

T: I figured so. Then you entered the Army, were you drafted into the Army?

E: No. I had to get my parents' permission before the age eighteen. I was only seventeen. So, I finally persuaded them to let me go in, they signed the papers.

T: What made you decide to want to go into the Army?

E: Well, at the time I thought it would be a good adventure and a few of my friends were going in. A couple of us went in together.

T: Where did you go during your first time in?

E: The first time I went, I took basic training down in Texas, Wichita Falls. From there I went up to Denver, Colorado and stayed up there a short period. Then we came back to Fort Worth, Texas. Then from there I got discharged.

T: What was your job?

E: I was mostly, what you call, small arms ordinance at the time. Then they had other functions.

T: What did that involve, small arms ordinance?

E: More or less just inspecting the small arms when they had to clean them.

T: After you were discharged what did you do then?

E: When I got discharged I stayed out west. Actually, I'll have to go back a little bit. When I left Texas, they shipped me to Fort Lewis, Washington and that is where I got discharged. From there I traveled up and down the coast, doing different jobs. I had a friend of mine, he lived down in California. So, we went to

California and we worked in construction for awhile. In fact I worked in a pottery while I was out there and a cannery; different jobs. Then, we decided to go back up north to the state of Washington and up there we got a job in a saw mill. I worked there for a year or so I think it was. Then I got a job one summer working in the logging industry. What they call setting chokes for the trees. After the men cut the trees down, we would come up with big cables and equipment, and wrap around the tree after they took the branches off. Then they pulled it up to the headrig, which is a big saw. They sawed it up the way they wanted it. That is about all until I came back here.

T: That sounds pretty exciting. What year did you come back to East Liverpool?

E: I came back here in 1954 I believe it was.

T: I see that you went back into the Army in 1956. What made you decide to go back in?

E: Well, I drove truck for awhile for Smith & Phillips Furniture Company. Then I hung around for awhile and I just got a little restless I guess. I said, "Well, I think I will join the Army and stay in there." So, I joined the Army and I stayed three years. Then I got out.

T: Decided against it.

E: Yes, right. So I got out and just right after I got out I got a job in Crucible Steel.

T: How did that job at Crucible come about? Did you know someone?

E: Well, the way that come about, I heard they were hiring and my brother-in-law needed a ride up there. So I rode him up and there were a few hundred men up there at the time. I was one of the lucky ones I guess. They asked me if I wanted a job and I asked them, "Doing what?" and they said, "Railroad." So, I said, "I'll give it a try." I took the job and I stayed there for about twenty-two years.

T: That was just luck involved, them selecting you? Did you know the guy?

E: Yes. But it was more or less just luck.

T: How did your brother-in-law do that day?

E: He got hired too.

T: Well, when you started at the mill what was your first job there?

E: My first job in the mill was in transportation like I said. I worked on the track gang, which is repairing the rails; taking the old rails out when they broke and putting new rails in, replacing the ties. Railroad ties that is. Just like labor for transportation.

T: How long did you stay at that job?

E: Well, I think we . . . I really can't say. Maybe a few months. Then they moved us up to braking, which consists of working for a four man crew, working for a conductor, and moving cars from one place to another. Whatever they wanted.

T: Which was the harder of the two jobs?

E: The track gang, I guess.

T: Generally men wanted off of that as soon as possible?

E: Right because, more or less, when you became a brakeman it was a better job. It was a cleaner job and it paid more. Everybody wanted more money and it was a very good job.

T: Did you have any choice, like in the beginning? They said you worked on track gang, did you have any choice about that?

E: No, we didn't. They wanted to start everybody out on track because of the seniority aspect of it. Like later on in the years, when the slow periods came through the mill, if you had seniority . . . If you couldn't hold a job braking but you had seniority in the track you could bump a younger man off the track and you still had a job. So, that is how that worked.

T: Well, did everybody move up to braking from the track gang or did you have a choice of where you could go after the track gang?

E: No, you didn't have to move up if you didn't want to. Some people stayed on the track because they liked the work. At the time it was a five day week job. It was guaranteed five days. Like braking, when you first moved up to braking, you went on to an extra board. They had what they called a seven man extra board, that is in case any regular man on the crew gets sick, they would call you out. Sometimes you only worked one or two days a week and you had to live on that money. Some people liked the track gang, which had a five day week.

T: What kind of wage do you remember do you receive on the track gang, or as compared to braking, how much better, how much more money would you make?

E: Boy, that has been quite a while though. I really don't know. It was quite a jump, it was a good jump.

T: The lesser job, track gang, you had the security of five days work?

E: Right.

T: How long did you stay as a brakeman?

E: Well, you are always classified as a brakeman. Just like when you are on a crew you always stayed as a brakeman unless your seniority called, you could hold a conductors job. Sometimes . . . I forget how long it took me to get promoted to a conductor, but even after you are promoted as a conductor a lot of times you stay as a brakeman so you can work a certain job. Some jobs you like better than others. There are so many in transportation.

T: What were some of the good jobs as you saw it?

E: As I saw it, I liked yard job best. That is where you generally went all over the mill. They gave you orders for different plants, different departments in the mill, and you went all over. I liked the job of getting around like that. You would see a lot of people and the work was good.

T: Well, what would one of the worst jobs be then?

E: Well, I always thought one of the worst jobs was what they called the car dumper. That is where they bring the cars in loaded with ore, limestone, and stuff like that. They have what they call a dumper. We called it the car dumper. It could pick up one car a time and tilt it over and then bring it back down, it was empty. The worst part about that, whether it was winter time or summer time, that dust always flew back on you and it was terrible.

T: That sounds like a health hazard with the dust. Did they improve the way that was done while the time you were there or is that just the way it was done?

E: That was just the way it was done as far as I can remember. Sometimes you could get away from the dust but depending on the position you worked. In other words, three men to the crew and if you worked way down the other end, where you made sure the cars were coupled up when they came off the dumper empty, well it

wasn't as dusty. A lot of times the dust just hung right there.

T: Did everybody kind of agree that the car dumper was one of the less enjoyable places to work? Was there something that rivaled it?

E: No, it was probably the one that a fellow stayed away from. Because of the dust and the dirt and you were more or less in one position all the time.

T: So, when you would move up from brakeman to conductor then you might be low man on the totem pole as far as conductors were. Is that how that was?

E: Now as far as moving up to conductor from brakeman, if the job opened up for bid, like on the car dumper, different people had a chance to bid on that job; the ones that were all qualified conductors but still brakeman. So, if that job came up and if the older men didn't want it they made the youngest conductor take that job on daylight. He had no choice because they have to fill the job. Seniority gave you choice of picking or not picking.

T: Did you enjoy being a conductor?

E: Yes, I enjoyed being a conductor. It was a challenge.

T: How did that differ from brakeman?

E: Well, the brakeman . . . First of all, you try to get on with a good crew and everybody works together. Most all of the guys I knew were conductors. They tried to promote most of the men to conductors when they qualified. Then, say if you became, like I became a conductor, on a job you handle all the orders. They give you slips of paper with the jobs, car numbers, and the jobs where they want the cars moved from one building to the other, getting ready to ship out. So, it is your job to place the men on the crew. Tell them what you are going to do and everything and you make sure it is done right. You do the same work as the brakeman does but you oversee it. That is the conductors job.

T: So, you were like a foreman then were you? Was there a foreman over you?

E: There was a foreman. He was called the yard master. He was over all crews on his shift. He more or less works out of the office. After he assigns you so many jobs to do, you go do those jobs. Then, when they are finished you come back and hand in your orders that he gave you and he gives you other orders to go out and do some more.

T: Since you were just one of the men they probably never gave you any trouble then when you were a conductor. Did that happen sometimes?

E: Most of the time I don't think the yard masters picked on any conductors or the men. It seemed to me that they got along . . . The crews got along very good with the yard masters. In fact, I can't say that there were too many disagreements among the men themselves, brakemen and conductors. Once in awhile you would get disagreements, but they all seemed to get along good. If you didn't get along with a man, you didn't bump on the crew where he was at. You stayed away from there. That is what made it nice too.

T: I know you had men of a lot of different nationalities up there. That never caused any trouble?

E: No, I never knew--in the twenty-two years I was up there--any trouble over nationalities. You were raised around all different nationalities, you just blended in. Everybody blended in together. They kid each other once in awhile but nothing serious.

T: So, the twenty-two years you were there did ever see any fights, or anything, at the mill?

E: Any fights, no. Verbal, yes. A lot of times it would get hot when a man argues, but no fisticuffs.

T: Which of the many jobs that you worked on, which would you say was the most dangerous?

E: Now, are you talking about in a steel mill?

T: Yes.

E: Well, I would say that they were all dangerous. You had to be very careful. To pick a job that I was always leery of was taking cars of coke and coal up what they called the blast furnace high line. You have to go out onto a trestle. There is no ground below you for about twenty feet and there are holes in between the ties. They have a cat walk, a walk way, about three feet wide where you walk on. I always figured if one of those cars jumped the rail up there it would throw you over. The car might not come down on you but it would throw you over.

T: Twenty foot drop.

E: Right, either that or squash you. So, I always figured that was one of the dangerous jobs. They had other dangerous jobs there too. If you didn't watch what you were doing they were all dangerous. Working around

what they call the table job, that is where you had to move buggies with molds on them. They are all steel and in those molds they poured the hot steel. A lot of times you moved them when they were still hot. If they would splash on you naturally it would burn you. If they would fall on the ground they could really burn you up. You had to be awful careful.

T: Do you know instances of men getting burnt on that?

E: Not real bad but splashed. I think everybody has been splashed a few times, where you get a few on your hands or maybe your neck or something. I have never remembered anybody really getting seriously burned.

T: Do you know of any jobs maybe that you didn't work at personally but that you knew were quite dangerous at the mill?

E: There you are getting back to the same thing where I thought a lot of the jobs were dangerous. You had to be very careful.

T: For the most part were the men careful then?

E: I think as far as I know, twenty-two years I was there, they never had anyone killed. They had men lose their fingers on different jobs and stuff like that. A few of them might have got crippled, got their foot crushed or something like that. Outside of that I don't think they had any fatalities.

T: Did you personally abide by all the . . . Take advantage of all the safety equipment they had?

E: Yes, we wore hard hats and on certain jobs they gave us certain jackets in case the steel did splash over on you. They furnished your gloves and stuff like that. It was very good.

T: So, you think Crucible did a good job of taking care of the men as far safety was concerned?

E: As far as I know they did. I think they did pretty good. They furnished equipment and a lot of times the men wouldn't wear it but the smart ones did.

T: You mentioned the dust earlier. Do you remember any other health hazards involved with working at the mill? Not so much accidents but dust, anything like that.

E: That would probably be about the worst. Except down around . . . I can remember down around the electric furnaces. When they turned the electric furnaces on, they were a little different type furnaces. When they

- start those up they just seem to put dust everywhere from the materials they used, from carbon, and just dust from everywhere. Sometimes you couldn't even see in there when you would go in the electric furnace.
- T: I talked to a guy that was telling me about the EPA coming in and wanting the mill to upgrade all these things. Did you know of the mill to break the laws that the EPA established? As far as letting the dust go or dumping anything in the river or anything like that.
- E: No, I never heard of anything like that. If it went on I didn't know about it.
- T: Now we talked earlier . . . You were talking about the yard master and not much animosity or anything between him and the rank and file men, whatever. Was that pretty much the case between management and labor? As far as what you saw they had a good relationship?
- E: I think they did. I think they had a good relationship. Now, just like . . . Well, they tell you something to do, you had to do it. If it wasn't safe you could refuse and you didn't get any argument. You just refused to do it until the supervisor came down, the superintendent, or somebody, or one of your union officials. Most of time it didn't go that far, they settled it right there. I think everything worked out pretty good.
- T: Did the union do a good job of talking care of the men?
- E: I think they did a pretty good job. They looked after the men pretty good.
- T: Did you ever go to them with a grievance or anything like that?
- E: I don't think I ever went out to the union office.
- T: Did you attend union meetings?
- E: Very few. A few of them I attended; just special ones.
- T: I know when the mill was closing down in the 1980's they held a series of meetings up at Midland High School. Did you attend those?
- E: All of them. Just like those meetings came up . . . At first I never expected the mill to go down that fast. I never gave it another thought. I thought more or less we could have . . . The union might have briefed us if they knew about it. I don't know if they knew about it or not. It was kind of a surprise to me that

they would shut it completely down.

T: When did you become aware that there was a good chance or a chance that the mill might close down? What made you realize that?

E: I think we started talking about that among ourselves up there probably six months before and then different people would say different things, and that got you thinking. We knew other mills shut down over around Indiana and different places, Youngstown. Then it started hitting home, we didn't realize it. When it did come, they started slowing down, you were only working maybe two weeks and then you were laid off a week. Then you were working one week and laid off two weeks like that, they were phasing it out a little. Then, we realized it was going down.

T: Well, then the first thing that made me think that the mill might close down was the closing of other steel mills. Is that what gave you the idea that that might happen?

E: Yes.

T: I wonder, it doesn't matter which job you want to do; track gang, brakeman, conductor. Could you describe what a typical day would be like? Like you get up here a certain time, you go to work, what you did all day until you got home.

E: Well, just take . . . Do you mean on a certain job, a brakeman's job?

T: Yes, a brakeman is fine.

E: Okay, a brakeman. I probably worked that most. Well, we would report in . . . I would probably leave here . . . We worked from 7:00 to 3:00. I would probably leave here a little after 6:00 because I lived very close. We would get up there and then we would punch in the time card. You knew what crew you were going to be on because you usually stayed on that job unless you bumped off. So, you knew who was going to be there by . . . It was a four man crew, you had an engineer, a conductor, and two brakemen. You knew who you were working with and you could tell if they were going to be there. Then, the conductor would go over to the yard office, which was about fifty feet away from the wash house where we stayed. The locker room, the wash house, and lunch room were ours. Then, he would come back with the orders and he would tell you what he was going to do. Then he would show you the orders. A good conductor always told you what he was going to do and how he was going to do it and then he

would show you the orders and make sure you knew what he was doing. I'll throw in, when I first started a lot of the older fellows didn't want to show you, they just wanted to tell you. After you are there awhile you get pretty good crew. So then, we would have our clothes on, we were ready to start. We would go out and get on the engine and according to how far we were going. If we were just going a block or so away maybe one of us would walk out in front of the engine and throw the switches to make sure you were on the right track. Then if anything was sitting on the track from another turn or anything you had to move over to a side track. Then you would continue, say you were going to a certain department to move two cars out. You are liable to get to that department and two cars you want might be separated by three or four other ones. There might be ten cars in there. So, you pick up the last one you want, throw it out and then you push the other ones you don't want back in and then throw your other one out and then push the other ones back in where you got them. Usually you took the two you wanted and went on to the next department and did the same thing, whatever cars you wanted. Then, once you got them all gathered up--how many orders you had--you brought them back to the yard office and they had a scale there. Then you weighed them and the ones that were being shipped out you weighed. They had a weigh master and he weighed them and then you put them on certain tracks where the other crews could pick them up and take them away.

T: How long would it take to say go and get a couple of cars, if there were other cars spaced in between them? How long would something like that take?

E: If there were no other cars?

T: Well, if there were cars.

E: Well, sometimes in the steel mill, the way it was laid out, sometimes it could take longer than others. I really couldn't say. Just to go up there and switch those two cars out of a particular mill I'm thinking of, it would take you maybe an hour or less. Simply because there are other people working in there and sometimes we have what you call straddle buggies that move small steel around and there are trucks and different departments are working in there, maintenance men. A lot of times you got to wait until they get their hoses, if their laying on the track. Maybe they are loading a car and they won't let you pull yours out until they get the other one moved. So, it depends but you could probably . . . I will just say you could go up there and pull those two cars and bring them back on their own in less than an hour.

- T: Now you mention the four man crew. Would you usually try and get on with your buddies? Was that something you would do?
- E: Well, yes in a way. The way I looked at it, I tried to work the yard jobs. When I had the seniority the whole daylight, work steady daylight. I tried to work the yard jobs. Usually it was an older man that was the conductor and the engineer. Then it could be a few years span in between the brakemen. Some people don't want to work with some people. They don't want that job. You usually tried to get on the job you wanted, plus the days off you wanted has a lot to do with it, and the people you work with. Mostly to me it was the people I worked with. So, I tried to pick the people I got along the best with that was on the jobs.
- T: Well, how long might you stay at a particular job with the same crew?
- E: They could change pretty fast because if a man, just say a man on what we called the third term, say he had more seniority than you and he wanted your job for a certain amount of time, he could put in a bump against you. It took ten days for his bump to become in effect. That gave you a chance to pick a job you wanted to move somebody else. On the average, when we were working . . . I know I held jobs, a yard job, for maybe as long as a year, maybe two years. In between that maybe you got bumped off for a month or two. Somebody wanted those summer months. You always tried to hold the jobs. On the average you could hold a job quite awhile. After awhile you get a little seniority and you know where the other people are going to work. So, they like certain jobs too.
- T: Now, I think it is important for people to realize that you had a job to do there and you worked hard. By being with people that you liked, was there an opportunity to enjoy your work? I mean to have fun, things like that.
- E: Oh yes. We had a lot of fun. There was a lot of kidding around in the locker room and joking around. You could sit down and have a pop or a cup of coffee with the guys and talk a lot of stuff over. A lot of fellows were friends. In fact, I met a fellow up there and I knew him to see him when I was young. My family knew him, and then me and wife got with him and his wife and we used to go play cards with them.
- T: Could you trust that guy?
- E: Oh yes, you know that. Want me to tell them it is your father.

T: No, that is alright. You mentioned that the weigh master had his office or whatever, the yard master had his, and the men kind of had a locker room, and you had a place to eat too. Were these pretty clean places? Did they take care of them?

E: Yes, we had good janitors. Different janitors at different years, you know what I mean. They come and go too. In our department we had a real good janitor. He kept things clean and everything. Most of the men, they were good enough to throw their own trash in the trash barrels and pick up after themselves. What they dropped on the floor the janitor got. He was a good janitor, so it was a clean place to work.

T: What factories . . . The other mills closed and first gave you the idea that this mill might close. What factors do you think led to the closing of Crucible? What was involved? You think it was the fault of management, the fault of workers, the fault of the government?

E: Just my own opinion I would think a lot had to do with the government, but then too a lot had to do with the industry and the unions. I think a lot of times the company didn't put enough money back into the mill. Even years before everybody trying to save money and a lot of times you could say that union were at fault. Maybe they wanted too much, the men wanted too much. Situations come up with other mills closing and foreign trade and that. Simply hard for me to pin point.

T: You mentioned that the union might have been at fault or the men because constantly getting raises. Is that the reason you think the union . . . They asked for too much?

E: Well, you go way back and unions were strong. After the war they got stronger and they would ask for more and the companies would give them more. It just got to a point a lot of times, I think, that they are both at fault. Then, it had to stop somewhere. Then the foreign trade and everything else. You can only give so much and you can only take so much. To me I would have to look into it. I really don't know. I think it was a lot of things involved.

T: I have talked to a lot of people that worked at the mill, not only for this project, and it seems . . . This next question I'm going to ask you seems to be split down the middle, so you should be on a particular side. I don't want you to take offense to it. Some people tell me that they worked an hour or two hours a day, got paid for eight, and other people are telling me that no, they put in their full eight hour day.

Just in general what would you say.

E: In general, I know some of that went on. Naturally a working man, if he gets a good day, he is going to take a good day. I would say I have had good days and bad days but I'll give you an example of just like your railroad. If you are out there on daylight you don't goof around. Just like they say, if you are working hard and you worked for a few hours, you may take a ten minute sit down on the engine and plan your next move out. That gives you a break. A lot of times you would come back to the yard office after you had been out for a long time and he would send you back out on a job. You knew you could do the job maybe if you rushed, more than usual, you could do it in a half hour. So, you could take fifteen minutes what we called spot time; break time. I have heard of fellows that had jobs up there, maybe worked four out of the eight and sat around. It has happened, I know it has. I know some jobs that you didn't get much break except for your coffee break. It is according to the job I guess.

T: Apparently from what you are telling me you don't think it was that wide spread. You think that had any role in the closing of the mill?

E: I really don't. I'll give you a good example. You can't blame it on the union, and you can't. On the men, and you can't blame it on management all the time. For one reason, just like I said before, the union had a pretty good thing going because they were getting raises, but the company must have been making money or they couldn't have given it. Another thing, you can't say . . . Well, we will just say I know of times that people have gone from transportation for a coffee break. Say they would sit in there too long for a coffee break but yet the management knew where they were at. All they have to do is call up there and tell them to get out of there. The next time, they would give them time off. They let it drag out, and so that is how it goes on like that. Then, a lot of times I think the men took advantage of it. A lot of times they got put in their place too. It is hard to say. It is as much management, and the union, the men's fault. Maybe they could produce a little more, I don't know. That is not for me to say.

T: I didn't mean to point a finger at the men or the management. I just meant that particular concept of taking time off. It might be management's fault for allowing or the men's for taking is. Do you think that played a role in it? Not blaming either party.

E: No, I really can't say. That is getting back to what I said the other time. I don't think that had to much to

do with it but that is just a small bit here and bit there. You didn't get in too deep. It is just like foreign trade. Maybe the company was trying to save money but the union wanted more and that brought conflict. Maybe that helped.

T: Did you notice a difference in the way the company was run, or Crucible was run when it changed from Crucible to Colt Industries? Did you notice a difference?

E: Well no, I never gave it much thought right off. We just went out and we did the same work. You know what I mean. I never noticed a difference because you didn't talk about, I never heard anybody mention it. We just went out and did the job, that is all.

T: If you had had the power to make changes up there, change anything you wanted, did you notice . . . I'm sure you noticed maybe one or two things. During your whole time there did you ever look at anything and say that could be done better or if I had the authority, I would make a change there on the way a job was done, in the way the management did something, or in the way the men did something? Did you ever notice anything like that that you didn't think was run efficiently?

E: Nothing right off. I know at times there were jobs like that that could have been done better. Some of the things . . . Well, it is hard to say. I can't remember exactly. I know probably management could put a little more pressure on, maybe the men could have done a little more jobs faster. There were some changes that you brought up and they changed. Some that they had, ideas, and made the jobs better. Right off I can't.

T: You are working at Carriage Hill Foods now. Is there a union there now?

E: It is non-union.'

T: Non-union. Do they treat their employees well?

E: I will have to speak for myself. I get treated good. I mean on the whole, I think they get treated good. I'll tell that to anybody, anytime. I know a few cases I have heard that the people haven't gotten treated good. A few have been fired. A few have quit. That happens everywhere. Everybody can't get along. On the whole I think the people out there . . . I'll just bring this up, it doesn't mean nothing. They just had an election for a union, a union wanted to be in. The people voted it down two to one. Now, because it is a pretty good place to work, and the pay is reasonable, they have a few benefits. It is a little better than

average pay I would say. The benefits are average. I think most of the people like their jobs. If you ask a working man he is always looking for something better.

T: That is the way with everybody. Now, what were your thoughts when you learned that mill was going to close. You still had to . . . You weren't really old enough to retire. What went through your mind?

E: I was a little worried. At first I thought maybe we had a chance to bring some other outfit in. You know, some other company would buy it up. When it got towards the end there, nothing happened. Finally the end did come and we knew we were out of a job. They were going to make us retire. We kept hoping there was somebody coming in but we figured there wasn't. What I thought, that I would have to relocate because with a small pension you are not going to survive on that. I started looking around the area for jobs and I never found one. Then when it came down to it I drew unemployment for awhile. Then, it came down to I was just getting ready to leave, I was thinking about going to the Carolinas to look for work. I had some applications in and they called me from Carriage Hill Foods. They offered me the job so I went out there for the interview again and the physical and they hired me. I was very lucky. I didn't have to leave here.

T: How did you hear about that particular job?

E: One of my neighbors heard about it that there was an opening up at the plant. You had to go through the employment office in Salem. I went out there and that is how I got in to see the people.

T: Are there many mill people working there?

E: Quite a few. In fact, some of the guys I knew from the mill, the older fellows. There are a few of them working out there and quite a few young ones out there too.

T: Did you take any of the training the mill offered or anything like that? They tried to retrain people, right?

E: Right, but I didn't take any of it, because I checked on it and everything but I figured I could do better, at my age, going out looking right away. At the time I was fifty-five years old. I didn't need to train and I feel very lucky about getting a job around here.

T: I can't think of anything myself. You worked there all those years, is there anything else you can think of that we haven't talked about that might be important to

someone along the way? Anything at all about the job or anything that went on?

E: About the job in the mill?

T: Yes, or about Crucible in general?

E: Well, I would probably have to sit down and think about that. We have covered quite a bit.

T: There is nothing else you would like to add then to . . .

E: No, on the whole I thought it was a very good place to work. In fact, I thought I would finish out. I would get at least thirty-five years in there and I would be old enough to retire. I was looking forward to that and I was surprised when the mill went down. As far as I'm concerned that was . . . I have had a lot of jobs and that was one of the better jobs, railroading at Crucible Steel; transportation.

T: I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me.

E: That is alright.

END OF INTERVIEW