

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

Crucible Steel Project

Personal Experience

O.H. 1147

John Pease

Interviewed

by

Mark Twyford

on

November 26, 1987

"JACK" PEASE

John "Jack" Pease, the son of Harry and Margaret Pease, was born, April 29, 1931, in East Liverpool, Ohio. After graduating from East Liverpool High School in 1949, Pease went to work at the Columbiana County Memorial Cemetery as a caretaker.

In 1950, Pease resigned his position as caretaker and went to work for the Crucible Steel Company in Midland, Pennsylvania. Pease, a member of the Ohio National Guard, was forced to leave Crucible on January 1, 1952, when his division, the 37th, was activated. He served his country, primarily as a tank driver until he was honorably discharged on September 1, 1953.

Following his departure from the National Guard, Pease returned to the Crucible Steel Company, where he worked until September of 1982. The bulk of his Crucible career was spent as a supervisor.

Pease and his wife, Shirley, have two adult children. Since November of 1985, Pease has been a supervisor at the International Mill Service in Mingo Junction, Ohio.

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INTERVIEWEE: JOHN PEASE
INTERVIEWER: Mark Twyford
SUBJECT: All aspects of work at the Crucible Steel
Company in Midland, Pennsylvania.
DATE: November 26, 1987

T: This is an interview with John Pease for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Crucible Steel Project, by Mark Twyford, in East Liverpool, Ohio, on November 26, 1987, at 1:00 p.m.

Jack, I would like to begin the interview by learning a little bit more about your childhood and the area you grew up in. Do you have any recollections from that time period.

P: I was born in Calcutta. I have five brothers. My father is still living, and my mother passed away ten years ago. I went to Calcutta for eight years of grammar school, and I graduated from East Liverpool High School in 1949.

T: There was no Beaver Local then?

P: No, no Beaver Local then.

T: What did you enjoy most about school?

P: Sports.

T: Did you play sports in school?

P: Yes. Well, not in high school, but I worked at the big five and ten when I was a junior and senior. Then, I worked at Columbiana Memorial Cemetery when I was going to school.

T: You were a busy man.

P: High school sports, no I didn't. I played baseball when I was a freshman and sophomore, but that was it.

T: After you graduated from East Liverpool high school, what was your first job?

P: I continued to work at Memorial Cemetery for about a year, then I went to Crucible in 1950.

T: So, that was basically your first job out of school?

P: Yes.

T: What did your job entail at the cemetery?

P: Just a caretaker.

T: Did you enjoy that?

P: Oh, yes. It was real nice.

T: Was it a good paying job?

P: No. It didn't pay hardly anything. I think it was \$.90 an hour.

T: That's one of the reasons why you were looking for other work.

P: Yes, right.

T: What led you to look to Crucible for employment?

P: Well, better job, better paying, and at that time I had my father and two other brothers working at the mill. It ended up that four of us worked there plus my father. It supplied our family with a good living.

T: Did they play a role in the hiring process? Did they help you get your job, or how did that come about?

P: Yes well, in those times you had to know somebody to get in. My father worked there, and I worked in the same department as my father, transportation. All my life I worked in that department, I didn't switch around. So, that is thirty-two years with transportation.

T: That is the department that you started out in too?

P: Right.

T: I think they started some people out in a yard gang, did they do that to you for an initial period?

P: No. I started out naturally as a lower paying job as a truck helper. Then, I moved up to truck driver, straddle carrier, operator. Then, I went to a sub-foreman, foreman, and general foreman.

T: Okay. Let's start at the beginning. What is a truck helper?

P: He just goes around the mill supplying different departments with different materials.

T: How does that differ from the truck driver? What does he do?

P: He was the driver, and the helper helped the driver on the truck.

T: Okay. What came after truck driver?

P: Straddle carrier.

T: What is that?

P: It is a machine that straddles bolsters of steel that comes from different mills. They put them on these bolsters, and you pick them up and take them to a designated area, drop them off, and record them.

T: Were each of these jobs a step up in pay?

P: Yes, each one was an advancement.

T: How long were you at these various positions?

P: I was truck helper when I first started as I said, then I went to the service. When I came back out I moved up to the straddle carrier. Then in 1965, I moved up to supervisor. So, it was fifteen years up at the mill until I became a supervisor.

T: Were these jobs dangerous that you had to perform?

P: No, not at all.

T: Were you drafted in to. . .You were in. . .

P: Nation Guard. I joined the National guard here in East Liverpool. They had a tank division in 1950. Right after that we got married. When we came back from the honeymoon, they activated the 37th division, so I had to go to the service in July. No, excuse me, January of the following year.

T: How long were you gone?

P: Eighteen months

T: Where were you stationed?

P: Camp Polk, Louisiana, California, and Fort Totton, New York.

T: What was your job in the service.

P: Tank driver until the last few months when I went to Fort Totton, and I became more or less a supervisor in the Anti-aircraft. This was different ports around the city of New York that protected the city from attacks.

T: You guys did your job well, right?

P: Oh, yes.

T: No attacks. Did you enjoy your time in the National guard?

P: Well, it was an experience. I wouldn't want to go back in, it was all right.

T: When you came back you got to keep your seniority in the mill, you got hired right back?

P: I kept my seniority. Wherever your seniority put you in the line of progression, then you deserved wherever your line fell. When I came back up, I had three years to move up to a straddle carrier, so that is the job I got.

T: How long were you a straddle carrier?

P: Ten or twelve years.

T: You enjoyed that work?

P: Yes, it was fun. It was mostly daylight which I enjoyed.

T: Would it be considered a hard job as compared to other jobs at the mill?

P: Well, nothing hard. You were on the road all the time with this carrier. You had to be careful driving.

T: You were a straddle carrier for about twelve years then?

P: Right.

T: Then you moved into a management position?

P: Right. I moved into a track department, and I moved in as a track supervisor for the transportation department. I held that job for roughly ten years.

T: How did the opening arise, or how did you get to be considered for the position? How did that work?

P: I suppose they judge the people from where they work and the different types of abilities. Later on when I moved up, that is how I hired my supervisors. You can tell when a guy wants to become a supervisor and when he doesn't. Different responsibilities.

T: When you became a supervisor, did that mean you left the union?

P: Yes.

T: Did that worry you?

P: No, not really. I just didn't want to finish the rest of my life driving a straddle buggy. It was kind of rough, and it was hard on your body. I just didn't want to spend thirty-five years doing that.

T: I can understand that. That didn't concern you at all about the job security? You figured as long as you did your job well you had nothing to worry about.

P: Right, that is the way I felt. If you did your job, you didn't have to worry. I thought I could handle the job well which. . .I must have.

T: Apparently you did. While you were in the union, did you think the union did a good job?

P: Oh yes, definitely. You know, you can look back with supervision, mostly whatever the union got supervisors got, too. So, you can actually say that supervisors or the union helped supervisors get there pays too. If they union got a raise, usually the supervisors got a raise. If they got better benefits, the supervisors got better benefits.

T: But you didn't have to pay union dues.

P: No, no union dues.

T: You got the benefits with that.

P: You could lose your job real easy, too.

T: Was that common among management personnel, somebody getting fired?

P: No, not really. If someone usually had a problem in one department, they would switch you around to another department and see if you cause problems in that department, then you had troubles. It was a good company.

T: Was your job as a supervisor hard?

P: No, it took a lot of time. Later on after the track department, I moved up to general supervisor then general foreman, and I took over the locomotive department. I had supervisors working under me then, so it was a change too. What we did was take care of all the locomotives and cranes, and maintained everything for the mill.

T: What did supervisor of the track department entail?

P: Keeping track of all the running rails and stuff in the mill. You had X amount of track gangs, and you had a supervisor working on each track gang. You had to make sure everything was on the rail, rerailed everything.

T: How many men would you have had?

P: Roughly, maybe thirty-five or forty track men at that time.

T: Did they give you a hard time?

P: Oh, union problems come up, but you have problems in any job you work at really

T: So, for the most part, the relationship between management, and union employees was pretty good?

P: Yes. Most union problems could be settled right in the immediate foreman's office. There are very few that go over town, but you have them wherever you go. You can have problems without unions.

T: Where there any major problem that the union employees saw as being problem that you saw also, or that weren't corrected?

P: Yes, that happened a lot, but like I said ninety percent were settled right in the department. It never went out. Like I said, you can go any place and have problems without unions.

T: Where there ever complaints about working conditions?

P: Oh, yes.

T: That was one of the main things?

P: Sure. You had to have showers, good conditions to work under, and equip people with the right clothing for winter, have the right tools for them. It always had to be on your toes.

T: If you had a complaint, not being in the union, what would you do? You would just go to the next supervisor?

P: Well, yes. If you couldn't handle a problem, then you would notify your immediate supervisor, the one above you, and tell him what the problem was.

T: I'm speaking of. . . Say, even if the rank and file don't see it as a problem, but you yourself saw something as a problem, a working condition or a safety condition. What would you be able to do about it? Who would you turn to?

P: Well, you would talk to your immediate supervisor. Then, you would see what place had a problem or a grievance made. So, you would talk to your shopsteward or grievance man and explain to him. Like I said, they can be settled. He would tell you what he wanted, and you would tell him what you thought was right. Between both of you it was usually settled.

T: Were there any working conditions that you yourself saw that you weren't real pleased with?

P: Definitely there was some that I wasn't pleased with, but I'm sure the union felt the same way.

T: Well, just for people that don't know anything about Crucible except what they are learning from the tape, could you tell what some of the working conditions were so that they can get an idea of what it was like to work there? There is good and there is bad about everything.

P: Well, what Crucible did, it was a stainless steel divisio of Colt Industries. They made stainless steel for different equipment. Well, golf clubs, bumpers, stuff like that for different department. The open furnace and electric furnaces, I guess were a little more dangerous to work in than what I had. What we did, we just went from every department with locomotives and trains and services them. It was more or less a service department. They would call for scrap, and we would switch the cars. If they called for trucks, we would supply them with it. More or less a

service department was what we were. You know, there were people getting hurt, but not too many. They always claim that ninety-nine percent of accidents are your fault. Things can be prevented.

T: While you were there, over a long time did safety conditions improve?

P: Oh yes, definitely. Different situations I remember--When I was foreman on a track that we were doing, the EPA came in later and said it wasn't safe to do this and we would change it.

T: Do you remember anything in particular that they might have changed?

P: Yes. They used to. . .When I had the track, they called hunch holes. They used to put rails up on the old open hearth floors, and drop bolts down through the floor to hold the rail on to the steel decking. A man would go underneath them to put the bolt up through or put the nut under the rail to hold it. It was pretty hot in the hunch holes, and you would put wooden shoes on your shoes. You had to run in there and put the bolt up through, fasten it down, and run back out. You shoes would be on fire.

T: Smoking.

P: Yes, smoking pretty good. Things like that seized because they weren't very safe. That one I can think of off hand, but I'm sure there are many more. There are a lot of things that improved. They had to. Not because the union forced, but because everybody else wanted it that way and so did the company. The company didn't want you working unsafe.

T: You mentioned the EPA. I learn a little more about the mill in each tape talking to the different people from up there. Were you aware of any EPA violations?

P: Oh, yes. I was taken one time to court up in Vanport, Pennsylvania on a safety condition. Safety bars and rails for overhead cranes and stuff like that. we had a crane that was run by a man on the ground. He wasn't up in the cab. If you wanted to move the crane, you just pulled the strings. He would walk down the floor to the crane. E.P.A.-OSHA came in and wanted a safety rail put up on the top rail above the crane. There was never anybody up there, nobody ever was up there. I thought it was silly to spend the money to put a rail up there. So, to make a long story short, I didn't put the rail up. They insisted, so they took me to the judge. I finally ended up doing it, but it was a waste of money in my book. Still it had to be done, they

thought. We had a locomotive pit that we used to flush oil and stuff down to the sewer and it went out to the river. the EPA stopped all of this, it was for the better. Just because they did it years ago didn't make it right. A lot of dealings with EPA and OSHA.

T: Now, the EPA stopped in a sense the dumping in the river, but didn't you always know when they were coming around? I mean, didn't Crucible know when. . .

P: Oh yes, you knew. Sometimes it was a surprise, but most of the times you knew when he was coming. You would dress up the department. You always had warning ahead of time that they were coming.

T: In times when they knew they weren't coming, even though they knew it was against regulation, did the dumping continue?

P: Well, it wasn't only dumping, I just brought up that one instance. There were different things, smoking and things like this. You might stop doing something when they came in that you didn't want them to see, but it was nothing that they probably didn't know. Our steel mill wasn't different than anybody else's.

T: Oh, I wouldn't think so. Did any of the men that you worked with get irritated by these violations, any of the people that worked there. Did they ever say anything about this?

P: Yes, they would come to you every once in a while and say that you better get this done or we are going to report you to OSHA or report you to EPA. That went on everyday probably. They were just trying to get more safety conscience, but you can't blame them for that.

T: So, Crucible built the water filtration plant?

P: Let me see, Crucible pumped the water for filtration for the city of Midland, too. They didn't filter the water for Midland, but they pumped the water from the river for them.

T: So, the city is almost wholly dependent on the industry too, so they are not going to raise rates.

P: Definitely Midland was.

T: So, they are not going to raise a big stink about the violations.

P: I wouldn't think. You hear things about smoking dust, but Midland was real good.

T: You mentioned Colt industries, Crucible being a subsidiary of that conglomerate. Now, you worked there before Colt industries took it over, right?

P: Yes.

T: Did you notice a change in the way things were done after Colt industries took it over?

P: No, not for awhile, but you could see that money wise it wasn't putting back into the mills what people thought it should have been and stuff like that. Later on in years you heard rumors that Colt was milking us dry and stuff like that.

T: You didn't see it that way?

P: No, I wasn't that high in supervision to see anything like that, you know. Maybe some of the higher ups could see it, but not the normal working people. You would hear talk all the time about that.

T: So, you don't think that had a role in it, or to the best of your knowledge that didn't have a role in the eventual decline of the mill?

P: I suppose it did in a way because that is what happened to most steel mills in the valley, no money was put back into them. Either EPA would take the money for profits, and tell them this cleaned up or that cleaned up and they couldn't put the money back in. So, definitely it had an effect.

T: So, after you were a track supervisor, what is the next step up that you went up to?

P: I went to a foreman in the locomotive repair shop, and took care of all the equipment for the mill.

T: How many men did you have under you then?

P: Thirty-five mechanics.

T: These were skilled positions?

P: Yes, skilled mechanics.

T: Everything went smooth there, too?

P: No.

T: No?

P: Always something breaking down, getting parts ordered, and stuff like that was a big job. Trying to keep

everything running, most of the equipment was old except for the few straddle buggies that they replaced every year, but locomotives and cranes were bought in 1940's and 1950's. Parts were hard to get. It kept you busy trying to get parts and keep everything running. It was a lot of fun too. It was a difference for me, working out on the track. I enjoyed it.

T: When you started at Crucible, do you remember what kind of wage you were getting when you started there?

P: No, I really don't.

T: It was pretty good compared to other places of employment.

P: I do remember back in 1958 I got hurt, my leg crushed. I was back as a truck helper. I think at that time I was getting \$45 compensation, which wasn't very much to live on. I was off six months with my leg.

T: Those were some tough times.

P: Yes. \$45 didn't go to far. Especially Mark, my boy, was just born, and we just bought a house. It was tough at that time.

T: How did the accident occur?

P: I was crushed into a truck dock-platform.

T: The truck just backed right in to you?

P: No, it was a hydraulic tailgate, and the truck stopped on this little platform. The tailgate went over the platform, and there was a wall behind the tailgate. I went up to stand on the tailgate. . .It was a standard truck, and his foot slipped off the clutch, and it crushed me up against the wall.

T: The extent of what you got for that was \$45?

P: Yes, I got compensation.

T: Nothing else?

P: No, that is it. That is the way it goes, just compensation. At that time I was a union worker. That was it.

T: It still doesn't seem fair.

P: Back in 1958, I don't remember what the wage was, but it wasn't as much as I was making I know that. My family helped out.

T: You mentioned you father. Was he in management, too?

P: No, he was conductor on the railroad, same department as I was. He worked forty-seven and a half years.

T: Did he every have an opportunity and just didn't want to?

P: Oh, yes. He had the opportunity to move up to yard master, but he declined because he didn't feel like he wanted to do it.

T: Did job security enter in to his. . .

P: Yes, when I went up there, he was the oldest conductor and nobody could take his job. He was secure. He worked all daylight. Before I was married, I rode to work with him, worked side by side with him for years. I saw him everyday even after I was married.

T: Were your brothers in the same department?

P: No, my older brother worked in the open hearth electric furnace. That is Harry. Glenn worked in the roll shop then he went to cold strip. Then, I had a brother, Ronnie, that was a roll turner. The mill supplied us with a pretty good living.

T: Took good care of the Pease boys.

P: Yes, pretty good living. We got our picture taken one time. It was in the paper of our family, how many years of service we had. I can't remember what it was, but it was nice.

T: What about your brothers, did they get involved in management?

P: Yes, two of my older brothers were in management, Harry and Glenn. Ronnie stayed as a roll turner. My other brother Bill worked in the mill too, but he didn't like it so he drove for truck firm outside. He actually hauled steel in and out of Crucible, so he more or less is part of Crucible too if you look at it that way. My youngest brother, Joe, is a school teacher.

T: That's a big family.

P: Yes, six brothers.

T: Were there a lot of injuries? I know a few people lost their lives in accidents at Crucible. You mentioned some of the more dangerous places to work, but were injuries like hurting your leg common?

P: Well, there were people in different departments I suppose. Lost time accidents, there wasn't that many compared to what we had before. At one time we had between six and seven thousands people, still at that time the mill wasn't that dangerous to work in. There were people getting hurt, but few deaths.

T: When did you first have an idea that the mill was going down hill?

P: Well, I heard rumors, and 1982 was my last year. We heard rumors in the late 1970's and 1980's that Colt wanted to sell.

T: Because they were losing money?

P: Yes, I remember Cyclops, and LTV wanted to buy?

T: This was late 1970's?

P: Yes, early 1980's. It don't take long for rumors to get around when someone is trying to sell something like a steel mill.

T: Did the rumors that you heard come up from the rank and file, or did they come down from the supervisors?

P: Both.

T: Similar rumors?

P: Yes. Your supervisor, if you had regular meetings, would say "There is a rumor going around. Don't say anything to anybody." There was nothing that the company knew that the union didn't because you had to work together to get the job done. It wasn't a big secret. Whatever went on, both of them knew it.

T: What was the closing date of the mill, do you know?

P: I think it was the end of 1982. I left in September of 1982, and I believe there were a few people left. I think the selling date was at the end of 1982 when LTV took over.

T: You weren't in the union. Did you go up to the union meeting when they met with official about possibly keeping the mill open?

P: Yes, there were several meetings that I went to, which everybody did. They were concerned to know what would happen. Yes, we went to meetings, and they talked about everything. They talked about buy-outs and stuff like that. You know, they talk about it, but it

doesn't really hit you until they do it. They say, "Oh yes, they did it to other steel mills, but they are just bluffing us." It happens.

T: What did you think about the way the meetings were conducted? Did you think that the union had the best interests of the men in mind at this time?

P: Yes, when they found out later on that they were serious about the selling then everybody pulled together and wanted to do what was best for everybody. As the years went on, LTV only wanted a selected few people to stay on the job, so that is what they did. It was very few, possibly two-hundred or three-hundred men was all that was up there working at the time. They dropped from six-thousand.

T: Were there other signs at the mill aside from rumors that indicated things weren't too good and maybe something is up.

P: Material wise and equipment wise, they weren't repairing anything. That is the best sign you can get when they are not putting anything back in. You know that they are not going to put money back in the mill, and they are going to end up losing or selling. Yes, you could see it. They would tell you to spend X amount of dollars. In other words, if you were spending \$100 a week, they would tell you to cut back to \$50 then to \$25, you knew something was going on.

T: That brings up something that seems strange to me then. You keep mentioning about what you said, but then also weren't they building an electric furnace and doing away with the blast furnace?

P: Right they put up a new furnace, and they were going to do away with all the rest of our melt shops except electric.

T: What was the thought behind that, do you know?

P: They thought that they would keep it. That was back around 1980 that they started building this. They thought that this would cut back on employment and possibly keep the mill open. Later on we had a few problems with it, and it just didn't function the way it was designed. They lost money on it. After they did get it started, they couldn't produce the way they thought it would.

T: Did you work basically straight daylight for the most part?

P: Yes, I worked straight daylight.

T: If you could use your creative powers here, describe a typical day as a supervisor. Like when you go to work and what you did.

P: 8:00 a.m., I work 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This is my last job in the locomotive repair shop. When I went out in the morning, I would check over what happened on the previous day on the second and third turns. There was always a list of parts to get and equipment to fix. My job was to make sure this equipment was serviced and got ready to go. I would be on the phone a good bit ordering parts or having one of my men, a material chaser, make sure we got the parts that we needed. More or less, day after day it would be the same thing. If it wasn't a locomotive today, it would be a crane tomorrow. There was always something that had to be repaired. Big money, when you repair equipment nowadays, it takes the bucks.

T: Since that was your job, you were keenly aware that they just weren't giving the money to repair things. You would be more aware of that than. . .

P: Right. You knew the price. Once you bought something it was marked in books, and the purchasing department would buy everything for you. You weren't allowed to buy anything on your own. You would have to go to the purchasing department, they would go to different vendors and whatever was the best or cheapest buy, they would get for you. I got my two kids jobs. Mark worked every summer in the steel mill and worked his way through school. My daughter Diann was working there too as secretary and clerk.

T: I have a question for you here, and I don't want you to take offense to it. Some people have and it is just from talking to people that I get this idea. In some departments I know that from what people have told me that they got paid for working eight hours a day, but they didn't always do that. I talked to one fellow that told me he worked about an hour a day, and then he found convenient places to. . .

P: Well, you're right there. . .I won't take offense to that because I chewed people out for this. No, I think that is what happens in steel mills today. They had a job to do, they would do their job, and then sit down. They wouldn't help anybody else and stuff like that. If people would have actually seen this coming years ago, where once you were done with a job you went over and helped your buddy, but it just didn't work that way. Not that you didn't want to do it. I don't think the union would approve, they would be afraid of taking someone's job away from them or something like

that. It protected too, you know. If more of this did go on, I think the mills would be better prepared. It seems like it doesn't make sense when you're done with your job, you are watching someone else work, he needs help, and you just sit there and watch him.

T: It doesn't make good sense.

P: No, that didn't make good sense, but it did go on.

T: Now, the men you supervised, did each of them have a specific job to do? Then, when it was done, could they take time off?

P: Yes, my last job was mechanics, and when we gave them a job to do, they were in a line where they could help other mechanics. So, it wasn't much. . . They could actually go around helping each other. This was not a problem because they were all classified mechanics. When they were done, they would come in. . . Well, everybody takes brakes.

T: Yes, I understand that.

P: I don't care where you go, you got people that. . . You got thirty-five mechanics, you know, thirty-two or thirty-three of them is good, and the other two are bad apples. You can go anyplace in a company and have this.

T: So, for supervisors for the most part, were they just told that, you know, as long as they have their job done just to let them go.

P: Oh, no. You always want them to be doing something. You didn't want them sitting around doing nothing, but they would give you an argument. They would say, "My job is done." If it took mechanics say, I'll take an example, if it took one mechanic eight hours to put a transmission in a straddle carrier, and he could have been a little slower than the other fellow that took only four hours. He says, "Why shouldn't I loaf four hours when the other guy is still working eight hours, and you are going to put me to work anyhow. . ." Which is right, you know? Let the guy work eight hours and put it in, and let the other guy work four hours and rest the other four. So, you had a problem there. You didn't want him sitting around four hours, and you know, some guys are faster than others. It took some people longer to do jobs. It created a problem like that.

T: What you would do personally then, if they got done, you would find another job for them?

P: Right.

T: They didn't appreciate that.

P: Some of them didn't, you know. Here they are, they got a point two. Here they are doing their job in four hours which somebody else does in eight, then after they are done, we put them to work doing something else. What is right? You didn't want them sitting around doing nothing, so. . .

T: So, you think that is one on the reasons for the decline of the mills, or one possible factor in it?

P: Yes, certain people. They didn't want to go out of there job class and help somebody else. We had different crafts that did different jobs, and one craft would sit around watching another craft do a job. It was a definite problem in the steel mills, which we tried to correct later on, you know, helping people out. I think nowadays where I am working now, International Mills Service, They do everything.

T: So, that is one of the differences.

P: The difference is people realize what the steel mills are up against nowadays. I think years ago if things like this wouldn't have happened, I think Crucible today would still be open.

T: What other differences do you see now between where you work now and Crucible?

P: That is it. That is the difference. You can put anyone on a job at any time. You can take a man off a loader and say, "Here, go shovel snow." Where, no way could you have done that before. He was a front end loader and that was his job. Now, the front end loaders too, would help the mechanics fix the equipment where I am now. It has changed, steel mills have changed. I know people today that work at LTV are helping. They are doing that up there too. It is not only where I am now, it is all over.

T: If you had had the power to make changes that is a change you would have made all along?

P: Oh, yes. Helping each other out, don't matter if you were qualified or not, you know. If somebody needed somebody to put up an extension ladder, you are not sitting there watching him bust his tail. You would give him a hand. Especially in crafts, if he was a qualified pipe fitter, you didn't cut a piece of wood with a saw, that was a carpentering's job. Nowadays they do it all.

T: Can you think of any other changes at Crucible that you would have made? Things that you saw that were wrong or didn't work as well as they could have that you would have changed if you could have?

P: Probably at the time, off hand I can't. Probably working everyday at the mill like I did, I am sure there were changes. The biggest change was what I told you, everybody doing every job that they are qualified or capable of doing.

T: Nobody sits around anymore.

P: Oh, no. You just go right on in with them. They know the problems of other steel mill, and they don't want anymore steel mills to close down. Oh yes, the union goes along. It is not much trouble. It not only prevents people from being sent home. Let's say you have a front-end loader that finds something wrong with his equipment. He will bring it in to the shop knowing that he is going to get a break. Nowadays, he's got to hydraulically call the format or supervisor over and he'll say, "I got a hydraulic leak. What are you going to do with it?" He knows that he is going to sweep floors or shovel snow if he brings it in, before he would just sit around. so, there is a little difference in. . .Not that you want to work if you see equipment that has a hydraulic leak, but the idea that they will work with a piece of equipment that they wouldn't work with at Crucible, you know.

T: You mentioned several things which might have been co-responsible for the decline of the mill, can you think of anything else that might have played a role?

P: You know they blame everything on foreign imports which I think is part of it. They claim that steel mills in this country were supporting or building steel mills in foreign countries for cheaper labor, so I think the foreign imports had an impact.

T: What were your thoughts when it was obvious that the mill was going to close?

P: I could say I didn't believe it at first, but when you finally realized that it was, it made you think of what was going to happen to the community and property was going to depreciate. What you worked for all your life, if you are going to lose it. I had a lot of friends lose all that they ever worked for. It makes you think. When it did happen, they had the schooling for different people that wanted different occupations. I had many, many friends that had to move away.

T: Did you take any of the schooling?

P: No, I just retired in 1982. For three years I stayed retired. I had a friend from Pittsburgh Wheeling steel that worked for IMS, and he asked me if I wanted to go back to work. I took the opportunity, and I've been down there a little better than two years.

T: What is your job down there?

P: I'm a supervisor for the International Mills Service. We process scrap and slag. Most of it is sold right back to the mill in Mingo Junction.

T: Do you make comparable to what you made?

P: Yes.

T: So, you're not complaining?

P: No. I am probably living better now than I ever have. Yes, I was fortunate to get another job.

T: Did you get a full pension from the mill, too?

P: Yes, I had thirty-two years. After thirty years, it didn't matter how many years or how old you were. After thirty years you get your pension.

T: So, you enjoy your present job then?

P: Yes, I really do. I'm working turns now. I don't appreciate that too much, but I enjoy it. It gets me out, and it has me driving little longer, forty minutes to get to work over to Mingo Junction. It is different, but it is nice.

T: As you look back at your career at Crucible, can you think of one word or just a sentence or something that best describes what it was like to work there?

P: If I had to say one thing about Crucible, it supplied the Pease's of a great living. It had some type of effect on our whole family.

T: Have your brothers done okay since the mill closed?

P: Well, my older brother went into a scrap processing business up around Pittsburgh, and my other brother worked at Allegheny Ludlum as Supervisor. Ronnie just stayed retired.

T: This friend that got you on where you are at now, had he been a supervisor at the mill too.

P: Yes, he was my supervisor in transportation. Then, he quit to get another job with a contractor. When that folded up, he got this job down here. Yes, I knew him from when I worked in transportation.

T: After you retired and in between the time you started down there, did you try and find other work?

P: Yes, I worked for a hydraulic outfit. I was a salesman there. Plus, I had a real estate license, so I did some real estate work.

T: So, you kept busy?

P: Well, I didn't keep busy, but I had other jobs.

T: Well, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me. There is one other thing I would like. Can you think of anybody that I might talk with that, for example, you are the only management person I talked with so far. Any other people who were in management? Maybe a different department that might have a different out look on things?

P: Not off hand, but I will try to think of somebody later on that you might want to talk with.

T: Okay.

P: You see, a lot of friends have moved. It was enjoyable, at least it made us a good living.

T: Well, once again I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me.

END OF INTERVIEW