

Bill "Leo" Cline

Interviewed by Gary L. Shumway

S: This is an interview of Bill "Leo" Cline by Gary L. Shumway on July 25, 1991 in Mr. Cline's home in Green River, Utah - 241 South Clark.

Why don't you just go ahead and tell a little about yourself; where you came from and ~~stuff~~ ^{all of that.}

C: I was born in Missouri.

S: Where were you born in Missouri?

C: Versailles. Right close to the Lake of Noah's Ark. ^{the Ozarks, Versailles is about 35 miles south and is} And then we came to Colorado and I had some schooling there. Times were tough in the '30's. I tried to get a job going to the harvest fields, or whatever, ^{being} a young man, and there was no work. The first job I had in mining was in Dale Grove, Tuckston, Panguense. ^{I was getting to be} That was the darndest over body you ever did see. It was cold and heavy and we'd mine that with dry machine. Old dry buggy's. Old 1280 and a 16 wall, a miner would know what those were, I got \$2.50 a day and food and then he got generous and gave me \$5.00 a day. That was my first mining. An old friend of mine that showed me how to do it did it in single-jack time.

S: What was his name?

C: Roy Marlicks. He did a lot of mining up in Silver Cliff and West Cliff area in Colorado. Anyway, that was the start. This overbody made a great big door whole and then the little veins went out just like wagon wheel spokes. We would trace them out and previous to this it couldn't take 45% is what they told me, I didn't know a lot about it. That whole dump we shipped. Every town dug. Until you see it in the eye (?). We never did

C: We started on that. It was an overbody we did treat it. That's where I got started in the gold mine.

S: And that was just out of Cripple Creek then?

C: Yes. There in the hills.

S: What was the mine? Do you remember? That last one?

C: We just called it "The Hard Eagle" (?), I guess. It was on Portland property. Right where the old mill-sack was. It's still there. Of course the shaft is caved in, now. It was so large. I think about as big as this neighborhood was. Wouldn't see across it. You wouldn't see the top. Once and a while you would hear a cave-in and it would make your ear stand on end.

S: Sure would.

C: Then I went into the Duke, it was a golden cycle. A crescent mine. They furnished hoisting, blasting material, a binge and had an aerial tram that they loaded. They furnished the air and timber, everything. And then you lease it. They got 49% and we got 49%. You had to do your own mining and furnish your own machine and hoses. It made a good deal for poor guys. Of course that beats a lot more than a company, now there are company men. Kept that old mine going for years. I went up there in about 1936, something like that. I can't quite recall when it was. It was tough going. A lot of people who worked in the old dumps in those days. If you had 18-20 100's you could make a good living. If you could find it. It was kind of hard to find it. Then when the war came on the first good bury got ahead. I was breaking some pretty good ore and I put in this round and about 250 feet down to the bottom. I was on the edge mining putting in 16 foot holes. And I'd already sprung them and built them up and I was going to put some heavy charges in. To my partner I said, "Now you quit rolling that stuff down here, man." I was just trembling to get out of there it was so dangerous. He said, "I'm not rolling anything down." I said, "Man well if you're not get out of the road let me see. I'm

S: Now Kimberley in Nevada?

C: Yes. It's just out of Elee. They would bus us in and out of there. Stay in just a bunk house for awhile. That's the way that was. I was into Argarage stokes. The shaft went to pieces. One set would be this way and one set that way, great big shaft pieces. 32 feet long some of them. Great big 16" timber in it. Beautiful thing. There were 6 of us miners they took and put us in there to repair that. They had a 50 man cage going down. Two skips and there was man way and utility way. Water, electricity and such. Big shaft and it was down draft. And you talk about colds. I got released out of there while I was on the ????. I don't know why, of course, I had been running dry machines. Anyway, he told me it would be best if I got a different job. So then I got out of there. I didn't like that climbing at all. I liked Elee himself and didn't mine working in the guys. You know they released 300 soldiers that said they were miners to that mine. They were hard up for labor. All in the Valley of the Gloves. You know there would be 1 or 2 or those guys get killed almost every 24 hours. I've never seen nothing like it, working in the smoke on the top level. There's just two levels, 500 and 800, and I was on 800. I haven't seen anything like it. It wasn't very long, it was only about 2 or 3 guys stayed, the rest of them went back into the army.

S: Boy, I'll say.

C: Before I left they released another 300 or 200. And then that's when it made it easy on me. They'd give me about 11 or 12 of them strong, husky, young buggars and they would just make child's play out of that. Of course as far as drilling is concerned it's just snow banked out of that old copper, there's nothing to it. I don't know if you could put the timber back in, I could keep them busy all day. Is the easy, to drill that ranine when you're used to hard rock. Them old boys would holler and sing and get those timbers up in there and had to use 3 or 4 sets most of the time 3. You had to replace your timber right off. Them great big, husky buggars.

You remember the food stamps you got?

cheat the government bid on that.

S: In other words. They would hand him stamps for 40 gallons but they would only use 37 or something like that and you would be waiting there to take those other 3 gallons. You don't remember his name, do you?

C: No. I can't remember. He was a nice guy, though. I really liked him.

S: That was in Elie?

C: Yes. I got gas that way.

S: What kind of a station was it? Do you remember? Conoco or Phillips?

C: I think it was a Texaco. But I couldn't swear on it. It's been too long.

S: Yes. That's been 50 years ago.

C: Yes it has. From there I didn't want to go back in the mines and so I went to Denver and worked for Kaiser. Out at Remington Arms they called it. Kaiser and Remington. The ammunition. And I think they were figuring on the war coming down and they made big, huge shells about this big around and they said 200 or 180 pounds, or something. It was about all I could do to lift one of them. You put a copper band around it. Anyway, for some reason I left. Oh, I was going to go to the farm. Where I used to go down and harvest when I was a kid. Well I went down there and tried my luck. Well that didn't work out. The work was over with. And then went down to Cripple Creek. The war with the Japanese ended there. And I went to Crickle Creek and got in a vindicator and tried it around in a nice piece of war and raised up on that and run into an old stove it was all gone. It was hard rock. I'm telling you it was so hard. Then I went back to the Duke again,

money. That's the way it was.

When they moved the mill up there I helped build it. One day I thought, well I'd like to go on a picnic. Get some pop and beer and a fishing pole. My wife says, "What are you going to buy it with?" And I said, "We'll write a check." And she said, "You don't have any money." I said, "I'm quitting right now." I was getting \$.90 an hour on that. And I did. The next day I went and quit and I said, "I'm going to the uranium fields." So we went off and found an old compressor. We were on Delores Rim. Do you know where that's at?

S: Yes.

C: VCA. It was pretty good but they didn't know beans about it. Well, this partner, he wanted to get a contract with Union Carbide. Well you can't make any money on that. And it wasn't anything drilled. Harris said, "Well, you go up there and you go and go and go in this place, and then you go and go and go in that place, you've never been there, it's out of this world." And there we were, nothing to drift to. They gave us something to drift. We scrounged around and got a sheet loads. We didn't get diddily. And so then we came in winter time. That was about \$1900 coming. We hit a little roll, accidently. And we never could get caught up with the money. The guy at the commissary was bawling us out. He wouldn't give us any credit. I kept telling him that we had money if we could just get our check. That's a likely story. You just go on up to the office. So we did. So then we had a little food. Anyway, we called it off and came home to Crickle Creek. I was there about 1 week and a fellow phoned me up and said, "Would you like to go back over and hold my share in this mine down?" It was the Jevernecks. They're on mill, too. I said, "What's the deal?" He said, "I don't have too much money. I run a little service station." There in Victor. He said, "I'll give you \$6.00 a day and 1/6 interest." That was one of their good mines, you know. And they were just about driving it. They had to drive under several forebodies and then we had to raise up about 10 feet. I don't know why, either. Anyway, we started in then and like I told you we sent them some good ore. We did all right there for about a month and then old Harris stopped it. And they were going to take the Visa away from us. We went down to headquarters in Grand

C: Yeah. Put a weight in there. Anything. Mix the stuff. Before we heard I'd drilled a hole in the wall and something looked peculiar on the rib and I put a steel in there just a little ways and it was this hard grain coming out.

S: And there wasn't even anything that showed on the drill hole. They didn't even have a drill to know what was there. And you just found it.

C: Accidentally. I was always looking. That's the only way you can mine -- keep probing.

S: The only way you can enjoy it is just dreaming that mud is going to start coming out black as anything.

C: It was soft and it was that blue-black blue, or whatever you call it. Yellow and Red and black and colors in between. A great big tree. I like the kind you get in, you know. That great big machine on my knee.

S: So it was almost 3 1/2 feet or so?

C: About that. I just put a short round in and raked it out on the truck, we had some flats there. And then I got another one like I said in tram cars. Beautiful. Now there we got something. We had been over there about 6 weeks and it was time to go home. We got up early in the morning and we loaded up those 7 cars, the big long kind. Towed them up and dumped them in the bin. Left word to haul it and away we went to home. It took us 4 or 5 days. Oh, man, they were fit to be tied. It went 3% or something like that.

S: And had Vanadium in it too, probably.

C: Oh, high grain vanadium. You bet you. Yes sir that old red stuff was really hot. That gruptight is, too.

C: No. This was on Mill 2.

S: Oh, yes. Urafan.

C: Yes.

S: On Club Mesa?

C: No. The slum part. Well I'd done alright for my share, and of course they get twice as much.

S: Was this the place that the guy said he would give you 6%?