

Ironworkers Documentation Project

**AUDIO LOG FORM**

Interviewer's recording no(s): BH IW [Martens 2]

Contact: Name Bud Martens (Interview #2)  
Real Name: Henry Arnold Martens, III

Interviewer: Clark "Bucky" Halker

Interview:

Date: July 26, 2011

Place: Local #63 Headquarters, 1819 Beech Street, Broadview, IL 60155

Other people present: None

Background noise: The Local IWU 63 headquarters can be a bit noisy and this can be heard in the background. It's an industrial building for the most part, so the cooling and heating system is a regular problem. Occasionally, the building even generates a line noise that is impossible to keep off the recording. Sometimes you can also hear people in the office section talking and laughing or somebody will walk into the room.

Equipment used: Marantz PMD 661 digital recorder and Shure SM57 microphone.

Recording medium used: Transcend 8 gigabyte SD memory card, uncompressed WAV format.

Recording engineer: Bucky Halker

**Summary description of audio interview contents:**

Note: This interview is in two parts. Each has its own transcript. Both were recorded on July 26, 2011. The first part (38:39) is a longer and more general interview about Marten that concerns his upbringing, his early ironworking career, welding, the trade, and safety. The second, included here, (07:14) is very brief and devoted to reviewing the companies he worked for over many years. Marten had given me a piece of paper with the chronology of his employers and some photos, so I asked him questions related to those companies and worksite photos.

**Audio Interview Contents**

Counter

No./Time

00:00-07:14

Topic:

No introduction. Review of employers sheet.

This kind of says when I started with Popovitch Ironworks. And I stayed with him until '61. [So you were with...] From 1959 'til 1961. [Was that when you bought it from him?] Yeah. Well, I actually... [1961. Or whatever you did with the tools.] Yeah, right. And then I went with Builders Ornamental 'til '66. [And were they a pretty big company, Builders Ornamental?] Yes, they still are and they're huge. [That's what I thought.] And they have all expansion joints in the O'Hare Airport, so they have a crew that works there all the time. You know. So if you get on that crew, you've kind of made it. [You don't have to go to different work sites to work.] I got married in '64 and I was working for them at the time. And I was putting up a blast fence for the jets to back up and start their engines against and everything. I guess it's to keep the blast from turning over any vehicles that drive by also. [So it's like a big iron plate or what is it?] Yeah, it's a big curved fence. And they pour all this, all the little bolts into the concrete, and then if you don't put a protective cover on the bolt, the threads get full of concrete and then, usually is what they do, is they'll put grease on the threads and put tape around them and then you have no problems with the bolt going on. But this particular job, they didn't do that and when we showed up, it was like, every thread you had to run a chaser nut, a thread chaser on. Just so time consuming, because there are no electric hammers, no anything. You did this by hand. Each one of those bolts. And then you could sit your frame up and bolt it down. [But why no electric, because where you worked, with the jets and everything?] Right. And I had another ironworker that kind of, "Hey kid, we don't wear gloves." And if you didn't wear gloves and your wrench slipped off... [Your hands would be beat up all the time.] ...you had your knuckles are all skinned up. And after a few skinned up knuckles, I said, "Well, I have to wear gloves." But anyway, that was there.

2:50 Then Alpha Metals, and that was...that was just, looks like 4-5 days, or was that an 8. Maybe it was a full week. [Yeah, it looks like seven days.] Yeah. And then Taft. That was the... [The school? No.] No. This was a company. These are all companies. [Oh, I see. So you put in a month, basically, at Taft.] Yeah. And then...

3:18 [Oh, this was when you were talking about...] Yeah... [...when you went to twelve or thirteen] Yeah. [American Bridges. That's a big old company, isn't it?] Yeah... And...Tri-State Iron. I can't even make out some of the stuff, and it's my own... [Is this a glass house?] Yeah, it's my own... [Your own handwriting?] My own handwriting, but you know what, I brought in my sunglasses. I didn't bring in my regular glasses. So... Anyway... It kind of... I would just jot down, not all the jobs, but you would have to jot down this stuff to know that your vacation money got paid in from this company. So even though you were an ironworker, you still had to be a pretty good bookkeeper and make sure that...any money that you had...that they were supposed to pay into the local, they paid into the local. So that's kind of why you write down all the different companies. And it just keeps going... And when it gets toward the end here, this would be the Midwest Skylight. That was the State of Illinois up in here. And then... [That was the company that was doing that?] Yes, Midwest Skylight. And then, I took an early withdraw, which I am so sorry I did... [With the union...? Was that pulling out retirement stuff?] No. That was because I stopped working in 1987 and then I wasn't doing ironworking, but I paid my dues until 1997. And then I said, "I don't think I'll ever do ironworking again. I'm going to take a withdrawal." So I took a withdrawal from Local #63. I opened a restaurant in 1979 and I had that until March of this year. [And what was the name of the restaurant?] Mickey's Drive In. [And where was that?] That's in Villa Park on St. Charles Road. And we've had that 32 years. [That's a long time for a restaurant to stay in business. Not many of them last that long.] Right, and that's why I was hesitant about going back to work with that apprentice because at the time, I had just gotten the restaurant. I left my wife in the restaurant and I went into the ironworks and went back. I re-instated in 2003 and then I worked on the Soldier Field project. And then I retired completely. [So that was your last job, Soldier Field?] Yeah. [Well, that's a pretty good one to go out on.] Oh yes. It was beautiful. It was a really nice way to end a career. [Yeah.] And now I'm completely retired. We sold the business. My wife is retired, and all together, she started with her mother in the hot dog business in '59 and I was one of her first customers. Never left and married her and then in '79 we got our own restaurant and she's been doing it for 52 years. And now she's completely retired. Now we're going to try to tour the country. [Good for you.]

END 07:14