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ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, JOSEPH E. VISIBELLI, of
name

122 FIRST AVE #302,
street or P.O. box number

FAIRBANKS, AK, 99701,
city state zip

transfer to the University of Alaska Rasmuson Library my
title, interest, and copyright to the interviews recorded
with me on JUNE 28, 1991,
month/day yr

to be used for scholarly purposes.

Joseph E. Visibelli
signature

6/28/91
date

ORAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

NAME: JOSEPH EMIL USIBELLI
(first) (middle) (last)

(NICKNAME:) JOE (MAIDEN NAME:)

MAILING ADDRESS: 122 FIRST AVE #302 FAIRBANKS, AK 99701
(city/state/zip)

DATE OF BIRTH: 12-28-38 BIRTHPLACE SOUTKANA, AK
(city/state)

SPOUSE: CATHERINE SHELLEY

MARRIAGE DATE: 3-14-58 PLACE: FAIRBANKS

CHILDREN: JOE JR., CATHY, MITCH, ANNA, ROB, SEAN

ALASKAN RESIDENCY: FOREVER

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION: EXEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT IN RELATION TO ORAL HISTORY:

INTERVIEWER: Margaret Van Cleave

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 6/28/91 TAPE NUMBER: 337

Joseph Usibelli, Senior

Three generations of the Usibelli family have been involved in the operation of Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. Founded in 1943 by Emil Usibelli along with partner T. E. Sanford, the mine is located about 90 miles southwest of Fairbanks and 10 miles north of Denali National Park.

Coming to Alaska in 1935, Emil Usibelli first worked in the Matanuska Coal Fields and then the Healy River Coal Company in Suntrana. His son Joseph Usibelli, Senior, was born in Suntrana, spending his first eleven years there.

"The power used for the underground was shut off turned off at 10PM. The night I was born, my father ran across to the plant and asked that they leave the power on until after I was born."

Of his childhood in the valley, Usibelli, Senior looks back on it with fond memories. He attended a one room school, most of the time being the only student in his grade.

"Everyone lived in company housing, the single workers in the bunkhouse, families in small frame houses or log cabins." Although "Cap" Lathrop had business enterprises elsewhere in Alaska, he spent a lot of time at his coal mine. Usibelli remembers seeing him wearing a sheepskin coat with a nail used in place of a missing button. together in place of a button.

Emil Usibelli strip mined because the coal seams were close to the surface. Mining in that area previous had been an underground operation.

When he was killed in a mining accident in 1964, Joseph Usibelli, Senior, became president of the firm, succeeded by Joseph Usibelli, Junior in 1987.

In his years as president, Usibelli, Senior, saw the company increase its yearly yield to over 1, 500, 000 short tons by 1987. With the growing power needs in the far east, Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. looks to a promising future in the export market along with the continued growing needs in Alaska.