

It was Christmas week 1970. I needed a job. I went to Harford Road Monday morning and signed up. That afternoon Buzzy Woods the business agent called me to go down on the bay bridge job on a Lima 2400. He told me if I didn't take the job I probably would not get anything until Spring. It was snowing and blowing when I went down there.

The crew boat dropped me off at 3 pm. They were working two twelve-hour shifts, 7-7. The guy I replaced was from New York, he had went home for Christmas. The barge was called the Charleston, it was being use to service the Loretta, the pile driving rig. During that first night Raymond's other 2400, the Catskill had an accident nobody got hurt but the head of the boom was in the water behind the rig. The operators cab was badly damaged. They sent the rig to a shipyard for repair.

About a week later over New Years, a storm came up. One of the steam rigs capsized, everything on the barge was on the bottom of the bay. The penny pinchers got nervous. A lot of the night shift got laid off. Carl Stallord The master mechanic told me to run the 45 ton Link Belt Truck crane on shore.

Later I was one of two deck engineers on the Kris T. The Kris T, was a 500 ton crane with 247 feet of boom. It had anchor winches with six nine-ton anchors, four air winches, a generator and compressor. There was a 3900 on the barge also. We set the heaviest 4 bell can on the job. The rigging we used weighed 125 ton and the can weighed about 300 tons. The water was 100 feet deep, divers could only stay down for 1 hour. We started the lift about 3 pm and finished the next day at 7 am. The divers got pile driver scale plus \$60 if they got in the water.

After the Kris T I was fill-in operator and I worked a lot of jobs. Here are some of the jobs I worked:

- Charleston – Lima 2400
- On shore – Link Belt truck crane
- On shore – Bantan cherry picker
- On shore – small dozer – road repair
- Kris T – Deck engineer & 3900
- Capitol – Manitowac 3900
- Anchor Piers – 2 3900's
- Anchor Piers – generator
- Anchor Piers – Tower crane – trainee
- Diver's Barge – with decompression chamber – air compressor
- Barge mounted concrete plant – concrete pump
- Steam rig – fireman
- Catskill – 2400

A coworker told me the reason I was on so many jobs was because they were trying to find something I could do. I don't think there was any truth in that. Or maybe that's why I was a crane mechanic the last 10 years I worked.

When the Catskill came back from the shipyard Ed Slick, the master mechanic put me on it. I finally got my daylight job.

The first job with the Catskill was pouring concrete with a 5-yard bucket. The big can we had set took a long time to fill. They had used concrete pumps but they were all broke down.

After that the west anchor pier was about done. I started digging the coffer dam. The cells were about 50 feet in diameter and I dug down 50 feet. The Cayoga Steam rig began pulling the 100 foot sheeting.

Over a holiday nobody was on the job. A storm ripped the 180 foot boom from the cayoga. The head section was stuck in the mud about 30 feet. They hooked the 2400 up to it—I tried to pick it up but it was stuck in the mud. I stopped when I thought it was unsafe. The west anchor pier Super came up in the crane with me. I explained to him what would happen if the cables broke. I finally relented and like a dumbass I listened to a dumber ass.

I took up a little more. The chokers broke, the Super took off running. Nobody got hurt. We cleared everything up and re-hooked. I took up a strain and they sent a diver down and cut the head section off. That head section is still at the bottom of the bay by the west anchor pier.

About a week later I was working with the iron workers taking down the first of four tower cranes. After lunch the Super walked up to Whitey the iron worker foreman. The Super said something to him Whitey gave him a right hook to the jaw. The Super went down after awhile, he got up and brushed himself off and walked off. That afternoon on the crew boat I asked Whitey why he decked the Super. He said in the morning the Super had told him to work 12 hours. When the Super walked up to him the Super said we had gotten a lot done and we should knock off after eight hours. I told him the Super was overdue.

While I was on the bridge job the then-President Nixon froze wages and not prices. We were due to get a 75-cent raise. We did not get it. To put salt in the wound, the pile drivers got their raise. The government would not allow us to piggyback on the raise. Later Nixon got his due

A non-union company moved their barge mounted crane in to work on the first bay bridge. It made everyone sick to work that close to them. We all went home. The next day they were gone and we went back to work.

After I dug out both coffer dams they had me backfill around most piers.

In early 1972 we took the Catskill to the dock. I got my pink slip. There was only a few R.D.L. people left.

The next day I signed the out-of-work list. I waited five months for my next job. I got called to go to Perryville on one of two Northwests. I took rip rap off gondola cars and put it on side dump cars. About a month later I loaded the 80 D's on a barge. The next day I unloaded them at Sparrows Point. I worked for C.J.L. for the next 26 years without a layoff. In July 1998 I asked to be laid off. They would not do that. I quit and signed up for my pension. My only regret was I should have retired earlier.

After over forty years of working my all-time favorite job was on the Catskill running the 2400. Over the years I was operator on three A models and two B models. The Lima 2400 A models were built 1948 to 1969. They were built to work 7 days a week around the clock. In 1969 they started building the B models. The last ones were built in 1970.

In my opinion Local 37 has the best leadership ever. The apprentice training is the best ever. The recent improvement to the pension program will enable you to get a great pension. A word of advice to those still working. Take care of the union contractors; if they make money it is much easier getting raises.

## Bay Bridges

The first bay bridge was proposed in 1907. With a Depression and two World Wars holding up the project, it was finally started in 1947. It was opened in July 1952.

The second bay bridge was started in 1969 and opened in June 1973. Raymond, Dravo, and Langenfelder or R.D.L. did the sub structure and American bridge did the Super.

The third bay bridge is now being planned. Five million has been allotted for the study. Nobody seems to want it in their backyard. Hopefully it will be built in the next ten years.