

Pensions (1948)

UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA
NEWS BUREAU
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Washington, D. C., September 9, 1948. — Four hundred and fifty four members of the United Mine Workers of America, as of September 8, have applied for \$100 a month pensions from the UMWA Welfare and Retirement Fund, John L. Lewis, president of the union and chairman of the board of trustees of the fund, revealed today.

These applications have been received by Welfare Fund officials in the past three weeks since the forms first were sent out. Applications, so far, have come from 17 states.

Mr. Lewis reported that the average age of the miner applying for a pension is 66.3 years.

Each of this first group of applicants has averaged more than 39 years of virtually continuous service in the bituminous coal mines.

It was noted that no other group of industrial workers has, on the average, served any industry for so long a period.

More than 30 percent of these 454 men started to work in the mines before they reached the age of 20.

The following cases are typical:

Leopaldo McNapace, 65, of Coal Creek, Colorado, who started to work in the mines when he was 8 years old. He worked steadily for 57 years until he had to quit in 1948 because of ill health.

Giuseppe Cerasuolo, 66, of Allison, Pennsylvania, who spent 41 years in the mines. He was laid off last January "because of old age." He had worked 24 years steadily for the coal company that laid him off.

William Watkins, 73, of Morris Run, Pennsylvania, who went to work in the mines at the age of 9. He worked for the same company for 63 years and was forced to quit in 1947 because of illness.

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