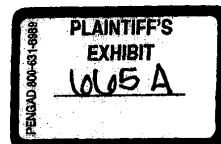


FILE NAME: Owens Illinois (OWILL)

DATE: 1952 Nov 26

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo RE Sending X-Rays to Saranac for Interpretation



November 26, 1952
Dict. 11/25/52

MR. W. W. COLEMAN - GAS CITY

cc - Mr. S. M. Cantrill - Gas City
Mr. W. B. Owen - Toledo
Mr. C. F. Shook - Toledo

Dear Bill:

We are glad to hear you were able to have X-rays made on the bricklayers who recently came to work at Gas City. Red Gardner and the writer discussed your letter of November 24 to Red Owen--and these are our comments.

Can you send the X-rays to Saranac for interpretation--just as is done usually with batch and furnace X-rays? The address is:

X-ray Laboratory
Trudeau Sanatorium
Trudeau, New York

Please don't think this reflects in any way on the roentgenologist whose diagnoses you have just received. It does not. The people at Saranac, however, have specialized for years in reading X-rays of men who have been exposed to dust--including refractory brick dust. Their interpretations follow a certain pattern so that we can compare your men with bricklayers who have been X-rayed at other O-I plants. This is the advantage of using Saranac in addition to getting local interpretations.

Incidentally, you will find Saranac's reports do not constitute diagnoses. They merely interpret and record whatever abnormalities the radiologist sees on the film. It is not possible to make a diagnosis from a film alone. A physician needs to have an X-ray, plus an occupational history, plus a physical examination. The X-ray alone is an aid, but it often is not conclusive.

The significance of the lung changes cannot be learned from what the X-ray alone shows for another reason: Silicosis is a slowly developing disease. Often a film has to be compared with one made a year or more earlier before a reliable diagnosis can be made. Again--if a middle-aged man who has spent a lifetime in a dusty trade has developed only early silicosis, he hasn't much to worry about. He's much better off than the man who has developed it at an early age.

It's interesting to hear those with long experience in silicosis say that when a man is told he has silicosis, the jolt to him is often so great, more harm results from the mental and emotional shock than from the physical effects of the disease itself.

For all these reasons, plus the hope that illegitimate claims can be avoided, we should proceed very cautiously in discussing findings with the bricklayers.

November 26, 1952
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MR. W. W. GOLDMAN - GAS CITY

- 2 -

Certainly we shouldn't tell them any results until we get Saranac's readings.

After we get the Saranac reports, Dr. Shook will advise you and your doctor how to proceed. In some instances, not much can honestly be said except that the man have another X-ray a year later--and then see how things look. Certainly nothing good would come of hinting that any of the men have silicosis, when we're not sure of the facts.

To summarize, here is what we'd suggest:

1. Send the films to Saranac as soon as possible.
2. Mark on each envelope: (a) the man's age, and (b) approximate number of years he's been a furnace bricklayer.

We know you don't have physicals or personal histories on these men, but we thought Mr. McKinney could perhaps work with you and help in getting each man's age and years in the furnace rebuilding trade (under any employer, not just O-I).

3. Send to Dr. Shook copies of the X-ray interpretations you have received from your local radiologist.
4. Wait until you hear from Dr. Shook before findings are discussed with any of the men.
5. If any of these same men are rehired at a future date, re-X-ray them. X-ray any new bricklayers who might be hired in the future, just as you did these men.

If it develops some of the present men do have silicosis, they should not be removed. Furthermore, if you hire some more bricklayers in the future, and on preemployment X-ray a man is found to have silicosis, it's questionable if we'd let this interfere with employing him. Bricklayers are highly skilled, and very essential; we can't often pick and choose among them. This bricklayer X-ray program was started as a fact-finding program, not as a device for selecting or rejecting this or that individual.

Next week, we understand, Red Gardner is going to be in Gas City, and Dr. Shook will be there later. If you have any questions on the above points, you can no doubt iron them out with Red or Charlie.

Personal regards.

Sincerely yours,