

Ok, you worked at Timberland mine, you worked there for a year and what was your job working at Timberland?

I only had one and that was running a hoist. And they swung it. I used to tend to the miners, make my trip up and lower down an incline. And they done away with it and they didn't do away with that. They put in what you call a McGinty or a Gravity.

What is a McGinty or a Gravity?

A McGinty or a Gravity is - you got two tracks, four tracks, and three tracks. In other words, the loads and the empties pass. You are, you got ropes around a field and the front controlled by a brake. It's flat up here and a steep knuckle so the roads go and you come go around and they go down one track and then it comes into four tracks. Then three, then four, then three. I just forget now. I think it's three, then four, then three. In other words, the car comes up and would sit up on this side, onto those guides. Then it would lands onto its side with its foreside and right at that particular point, the loads pass the empties there. You get what I mean?

Yes, so you let them have the three tracks and then they'll have cars going down of it. That extra track is just allow the particular point to pass and continue on. So it had to be done exactly on time.

When they had a McGinty, that's on a small scale. A one car. These was four and it was steep like that.

You mentioned knuckle. Does that just mean you got a flat surface and just a sudden drop? Just like you bend your hand like that.

Yes, you'd make a trip up, you see. You get a big block in there, you see, a safety block, Make your trip up and you put your rope on it. Then you're all ready to go and he brings you the bottom, the empties is hooked on. Then when you take that block off, it's a kick block it's a little bit of a downhill, a little kick. Sort of a kick block, that when you kick it you let these loads go and your, at your drum just waiting, Your rope is going to be tight like eh. It ain't going to go with a lunge. Just enough to, you know. And that load then pulls the empties down at the other end. The fella at the other end put them empties on so, you go. Same thing. The next time only on the opposite track.

What would say that sticks in your mind about Timberland Mine? What about the coal? Is it a good coal or was it?

It was a good coal. See what closed it down when I was there, Timberland Logging Company used to haul the coal down. As they brought their logs down, they'd pick up the Timberland Mine coal and that finished the mine. See, because they stopped logging and it

later date Northfield Mine used to work. It petered out and they re-opened Timberland Mine, where I didn't work there then. They opened it and took it out like longwalls. When I was there, it wasn't longwalling. Used punching machines to take the dirt out and used what they called pillar and stall if you know what taking about.

Ok, I know what punching machines but explain what pillar and stall is?

Well, say we got a road going up here, a road going up here, right? And a road going in here, and a road going in here, and a road going in here, and we maybe go through to there. That's a pillar. You get it? And now where you're working is a stall, right? A pillar is that block of coal. If you took that all out, you ain't going to get this out, are ya? You get what I mean. Then if the mine is finished, and we pull the pillars then we start here and take all this as we're coming back because it doesn't matter if it stays behind. So that's pillar and stall. You're working in there.

So, in a seam of coal, you got two roads.

Not necessarily. Maybe more than that.

Maybe more than one road. But every once in a while, you go in between this seam and the other two roads and you have side roads.

I'll just give you a quick sketch. I'll show you what I mean. Say that's the main road where all the coal goes out. There's one road that goes up here. So many feet back here, the other one goes up here. Then you just go in like this. Here's your little roads. And they go through. When they come to that, this is going to be the new road, you start driving this road, right? And when this one's through, here's your pillars in here, right? Here's your pillar, all right? When this goes to here, this is eliminated. You're going to start here and the go on the end. Same maybe likewise on this side, you see? You get it? All your coal goes out that road to the hall, used to take it outside.

So, but even though the line to here, what about all this area? Is it no good?

Oh yeah. The pillar to come back, but normally that's a long wall when it's done like that. Like Jinglepot Mine. There's no coal left in there at all. Couple of mines, there's no coal left in there because, when you use coal cutters or longwall take everything, but they don't do it high coal, they can't do it. Do you understand?

So this pillar and wall method you just.

That's in high coal.

You just cut though and you come to, you just cut though and then later on you'll come back to it later and you mined out what you've already done.

That's right.

Now I understand.

But the longwall, there's nothing there. You get it?

They just sort of strip everything out.

Number 5 in Cumberland. About every two months, you put on a squeeze and scare the life out of ya.

You put on a what?

You put on a squeeze. All that coal, everything's out of there, you know? And she puts on a squeeze and see it's that high, eh? And you're working right here and you're going to move the pans into this here for the next. This is solid now, it puts on a squeeze. It scares the life out of you. It's all cage. Right across that three hundred foot long we'll say.

So, you got this immense amounts open space and the ceiling starts to go [makes creaking noise].

Scare the life and soul out of you. And it comes within, very close to your backside. Like say the pans is there. They're only that wide and we're going to move them from there to here. Here's the solid block of coal cut eh? It's from a cave right, dropping all around while you're getting them plans out of there.

So, you are against the wall there's still a certain amount of support there but further way up the cave, that's where caving right next to you?

Only about from here to that cupboard away from it.

Yeah, I mean the coal, the ceiling would be dropping around you.

Yeah, right up to there. Right up to there. Then there's your break because this is all timber and here's the start of coal right here. And you got you're pans in there and your pan engine and you're going to it move over to here, so's when the miners come on, they're going to load this coal onto here and go to on again. That way for maybe a month and the same happens again and that's when all cave behind you.

So, you sit there, put your timbers up and then the rest of it sort of goes.

Oh, you oughtta hear it.

That'd scare the life out of you.

You oughtta hear it. And there's a mine down here, I'm off the track here but twelve o'clock midnight you'd swear to God the end of the world was coming. Every night at midnight.

I'm glad you said that. Because another miner has said that and other miners sit there and say they never heard of such a thing.

Oh she probably. The other miner might not have worked in that mine. And that was Number Five in South Wellington.

It was just that I've heard that before and I've been quizzing miners to see if they heard the same thing. But that's good that you said that.

It's the same with reading the time. I never worked in Protection Mine. But the guys could tell the time by the vibrations of the Princess Patricia when she went over. They could hear the vibrations of the propeller.

Yes. So, around twelve midnight almost every night, or every night you would hear, there would seem to be extra pressure on that ceiling.

I don't know what the hell it was, but I'm telling ya. I got used to it, but [laugh].

Give you the willies. And that was at Number Five South Wellington.

Yes, Number Five Mine South Wellington.

Well after, ok, we're at Timberland Mine ok, we've finished there now, ok. Where did you go after that?

Number Nine at Wellington.

Number Nine at Wellington. And what was Number Nine at Wellington like?

It was a very wet, shallow mine. It had a roof and the minute it rained outside for one day, it got rain down below for three. I only worked about short period of time and then it closed down. It was a poor producing mine. It had too much dirt to move for the amount of coal. The only thing I ever done there was go mule and I used to come out of there like a drowned rat.

So it was a very unpleasant place to work.

It was. I can show you where the mouth of that slope is right now. It re-opened again. So, I went back again and it only opened for about two weeks again. And they brought in another mine boss and it opened again. I think it was three times and I drove mule. When if mule slip you got 'er, right in the mush. Slop.

Ok, after Wellington Number Nine, which mine did you work in after that?

I'm ahead of myself, I'm ahead but the other one wouldn't come. I got a job at Cassidy and I got my wrist broken the first shift so.

So, was that the Bright Mine at Cassidy where you got your wrist broke?

No. The main Granby mine. The big one.

And you broke your wrist there?

Yeah, and I got better and that's when I went to Wellington Mine. Then I went to Number One.

Number One was one of the biggest operations in the city.

It was, in a way. You see, you gotta remember, it was two mines in one. All the coal from Protection Mine come up Number One which now she's going to produce more coal because some of the coal belong to Protection Mine. They're both connected, eh? But the mine itself's a separate mine.

Yes. At Protection Mine, what was your job? Not Protection, I mean Number One.

Driving mule.

Driving mule.

That's all I did there. Drive mule.

And, ok, how long did you work at Number One?

Not too long. About, it was 1949. I don't think I worked there about no more than four months. I got fed up because I had issues with driver boss switched me to go two shifts in another section. And in that section where I work that's where I think still bodies there. That's why they could only work at one shift. There was so much heat in there. Miners

worked with their shorts and they couldn't work at two shifts. So the driver boss he was going to have me on afternoon shift so I would ride with him from Northfield to work. Would be ten cents a day in his pocket or twenty cents a day, so I quit. I quit then I went to Drumheller.

Ok, you went to Drumheller. We're just sticking to Nanaimo. We'll skip Drumheller for a while. OK, Durmheller. Did you go there in the 20's or the 30's?

'29.

'29. Just before the collapse of the market?

Well, I know it was the last of the harvest See, I went harvesting. And that was the last price of the harvesting and I went to the mines.

OK, after Drumheller you came back to Nanaimo?

Well, you only work the wintertime Drumheller, right? I came home in the spring.

Oh, so you only stayed there for about a year then.

I didn't stay there a year. The end of August to anywhere around the end of February. That's all.

And then you came back to Nanaimo.

Yeah, so I see about beating my way back, you know? I'm afraid then.

So, which mine did you work?

I went to Extension.

You went to Extension. During this time, did you ever get married? Or are you still single?

Not yet. Not yet. I ain't married yet.

OK, so I don't have to worry about families and that yet. OK, you worked at Extension. What was your job at Extension?

Driving horse. Mule. Mule horse, whatever it is.

And did you stay on long enough to go to a different job?

No.

You went. Did the mine close down or?

Yeah, about 1930. That particular area where I worked, I could crawl out through a hole and I could look down at Nanaimo River.

Oh, from a hole in the side of the fate?

No, they used to cipher the water out of where I was working into the river like, the river's way down there and there was a ciphen hole and I could look down into Nanaimo River.

I guess you sort of thought that was neat at the time.

It was a long way in there. It was all molders you know brought our empty cars in. You only worked about five hours. By the time you got in there and you harnessed your horse and you started and you finished an hour and a half before time in order to get your horse out, put in the barn and take the motor off to the outside. I there about eight. Well, I wasn't there very long. I came in about February. I was there about six months then time to go back to Drumheller.

OK, so you mean after that time you working at Extension you were going back to Drumheller? So did you?

Yes.

Well, how long did you stay in Drumheller?

Same length again.

So like the winter season again.

So.

Then you came back to Nanaimo and which mine did you work at then? I got, you said Number Five or Ten here.

Number Five South Wellington or Number Five. No. I think I did Extension again. I'm not sure now. And I worked about six months again. I then went back to Drumheller again.

So, this was the Depression time so.

This was '30-ish. I was only working about two or three days a week here.

So in order to keep continuous working you had go from Nanaimo to Drumheller, Nanaimo to Drumheller.

I liked Drumheller, that's why. I used to have good times. I used to boxcar, no paying. Boxcar back.

OK, you got on this list here you got Number Five South Wellington, Number Ten South Wellington and Alexandria Mine. Those are all in the South Wellington area.

Well, Number Five and Alexandria's practically one because we tapped, they tapped the Alexander from Number Five and I happened to be working in Number Five at the time they tapped the Alexandria. Then the Alexandria then became one mine but I didn't work in the Alexandria. But I was in Number Five when they tapped the Alexandria, full of water see?

Oh and then they flooded the mine.

They flood it and they flooded Number Five. It was finished anyhow. They were pulling it back. When they tapped that water, everything they brought, everything out of Number Five and let the water run through a tunnel from Alexandria where they tapped it, let it all run down and fill up Number Five, eh? Then they opened up Alexandria.

And you didn't work there.

No, I didn't.

Ok, then after that they flooded Number Five by tapping Alexandria Mine, where did you go then? Back to Drumheller?

Yeah. I went back and forth from 1929 until 1936 to Drumheller. Every winter.

Ok, you got a thing, Blackburn BC aerial burn.

Blakeburn. That's up in, that's near Princeton, eh? That's where forty-nine men was killed. I worked too. In between, but you can forget about that. They get all the bodies out. I never. I worked there.

When that accident happened? Or before?

No, I quit just before it happened. I went up to Drumheller.



Good thing you were going back and forth to Drumheller all the time.

I didn't know that. I'd have been in it. I'd have been in it.

Good thing you had Drumheller on your mind all the time. Maybe Drumheller's a good omen for you. You got a list in here called "old mines Departure Bay mines". Did you work there?

No. No, I just thought. I wrote them down I know where they'll all at. I know dozens of them. I know their numbers, their names and everything but they didn't work in my time. The only ones that worked in my time I think I got 'em here. Like Reserve Mine, eh?

Did you ever work in Reserve?

Yes. That's the deepest mine on this island.

Yes, I heard about that. It was something like eleven hundred feet down before they closed it off.

Yeah, but there's two shafts. One is deeper than the other. The other one you hoist the water up. All the water goes down into that lower one. It was hoisted up by cage and they had a tank on it. Dropped down in the water and up she went. I rode up it one night, I know. If something went upside weight would take it out. I rode that upside, I got drowned by the water dripping off the walls. I come back in '36 from Drumheller and I got married.

Oh did you?

I got a job in Reserve Mine.

Oh yes.

I worked there from that time and it finished in 1939. I worked the last shift, I wanted to work the last shift in Reserve Mine. Had to be out of that mine by nine o'clock on the afternoon shift and that was the end of it. In 1939.

And then not too long after that, World War II broke out.

Yup. I then went to Cumberland. And I worked at Number Five Mine in Cumberland and I still hadn't divorced. Like I'm split. I had my wife for about four years, eh? I lived at Northfield that time and worked at Reserve. I went to Cumberland. I got a job up there Number Five Mine. Well, there's not many animals, I was in airways. I was on the pan for when I'm talking about this. And, I got fed up. I then went back to Drumheller. When I got there, my divorce had gone through so I started in the mine there and I said that's it. I took a freight train in

twenty-five below zero and went and joined the army. 1941. In Calgary. Then I come back from overseas and I start again in the mines.

And which, after the war which mine did you start in then?

Number Ten.

Number Ten. And that's South Wellington again.

That's the last miners going outside I think not the white rapids. I get mixed up. There's two of them. There's white rapids. That's the outcroppings of Extension Mine. That's out, going out Nanaimo Lakes Road. The other one. One they called the Bright Mine and one, it was at Cassidy. The outcrop was a Gramy mine, now. I get mixed up in the two names. One was the Bright Mine and one at Cassidy. I think that was the Bright Mine. And the other one, Vangerhadit. Hope they're not on Milight road like, if you go through Extension in this way, it comes out at Nanaimo Lake Road. Well, it's just about there where you come out. I can't think. I get mixed up. One's the Bright Mine and the other one I forget, but I only worked a little while in Bright Mine, about shifts. Just when they were cleaning it out ready to try and it opened up as a mine. But I worked at Number Ten. Number Ten was my last mine. Til I went back to Drumheller.

So after, you went back to Drumheller.

No, I tell a lie. I tell a lie. It wasn't in that respect. When I come back from overseas, I went to Number Ten. And I married again, overseas.

Oh yes, so you married someone in Europe.

Is that Europe? Oh yeah. She come out here just ahead of me. And I, she was already across the Atlantic when the war was still on. I had no choice, but I got a job in at Number Ten.

So she's English then?

Yeah. You want to just like, ah my, brought a test to the boss. Irish back. Send him out here. You know, if you were halfway decent man in the mine you could always get a job see? It was hard work though. Anyhow that was my last mine and I got smashed up in it. Got badly smashed up. 1951. I never, that's it. I never went back. I started at the Department of Highways. Even though I miss the coal mines. When you done your work, you done your eight hours bank to bank, you were finished. When I worked for the highway department, I was never finished. Phone call, six o'clock, eight o'clock. It's freezing tonight Harry, you'd better come out salt and work two to eight o'clock in the morning. And the wages I made, mind you, I mined coal too and I done that at Number Ten. The biggest

wage I made in the mine as thrown a haulage was nine dollars a day. That was Number Ten Mine unless.

You were in 1951 and you're making nine dollars a day? Whoa. Times have sure gone.

You know what I made five years ago on a grainer? 33.79. Working the Department of Highways. Yeah. And running a grater. It was a grain grater, but if I run, that's what I got and if I went flagging or whatever it maybe, I still got that wage because they classed me as two on any job I went on. You get what I mean? 33.79 a day. That's five years ago on the seventeenth of May when I retired. I had to retire. No kidding.

Wage's sure increased. A lot of source of inflation.

Well, I'll tell ya, I'll tell ya the biggest money I ever made in a coal mine. One day she, I had a miner's ticket. I got BC ticket, eh?

You had two miner's tickets then?

I had one from Alberta and I never used it, but I still got it. And I got one here and I use it here. I did dig go to Number Ten. And one day like, then I quit the digging and I went back on the haulage, I would take on a Friday afternoon, maybe this guy's off, that guy's off, they're short a man. So I'm a haulageman with a miner's ticket. Well they would say Harry would you like to go with say, you? You're partners at all. Ok. Got a good show tonight, like say weight has left this place we're going to. And the biggest I ever made, the two of us loaded thirty cars full, that's two ton to the car, and all you're drilling and shooting, he was shooting, three sets of timber and I got half a ship of haulage. In other words, when we got four loads, I would take them down to the bottom, there was a hoistman there, bring up four more empties and we started again. I'd leave an empty car with him, I come back and he's four to loaded like. I made twenty-seven dollars. But look at the coal loaded, look at the work I did, we did and the young fellow was running the hoist, well he wasn't a young fellow. I give him two dollars out of my pocket. He was making wages for it. When you put the timber up, you had to use wedges, you know, to timber the wood. Out of my pocket cause he helped us you know. So, let's say I made, I made twenty-five dollars. Then you had to lay your own track. Like for instance, you find pieces of rail, say we've gone too far and was too far to throw it, so. Twenty-five dollars so I say was for money you're going to drive a car ok? You're going to drive a car, so there's two of you, so that's fifteen dollars each right? The rest is made up of timber or whatever. That was the biggest money I ever.

So for every cent you made, you worked for it.

Yeah.

So I mean when you got paid, you got paid for practically every second you worked. I mean, you didn't get it for just sitting around for it.

You got your off extras too. If you didn't work, you didn't get paid. Simple as that. Unless you were on the haulage and if you were on the haulage, if the miners didn't get the cars done, it's you. What's wrong, you know?

Yes.

So, I open Number Ten. It was coming down to us the last Christmas. I was on the back end. Molench Parker was inside the loaded car like, eh? Jeez, when that rope broke I let, I jumped. She caved it and I had to go for about a mile and a half away around to get out. So did the miners. And all of the cave was on top of, airline was rolling. I used to see my lunch bucket.

Smashed.

But before I go, fuel part line. I rode that main rope, I told you where the coil, you brought it outside. You never rode the front end of it and it looked dangerous to ride in between, didn't it? You know, chunks of coal would maybe roll off. But if you run the front end of the rope well, front car went up in the air where you're in between, you just jumped off to the side, you know?

Yes.

It took a man to put a safety car on the back of [inaudible]. More trouble than they used to know. And it sprayed with dust and every weekend they had to rut-dust those [inaudible]. So many tons. Safety car on every loaded trip went up and down.

Yes. OK, I'm going to ask you some questions about safety in the mines. Would you say that safety in the mines, would they have enough safety regulations or was there enough for the companies to show you safety?

That was one thing that was never taught to you. You're on your own. You're on your own. They only safety end of it to my knowledge was every once in a while I'm expected, but it used to get around you're going to get searched today, before you go down. And nine chance out of ten now you were beating the safety rules yourself also. Word would be around the inspector's coming down. You should drive from the back entrance. I mean, alright. Things like that. And when he's gone, you just go back to normal again.

So, you sort of like, in your way of working, tried to make your, get your wages done and do your work right.

And it was, I'm going to try to beat you. It's what you call a cuttletoe, like the miners. It's a contract right? You know what I mean.

So workers were competing against each other.

That's the worst thing that ever happened to any type of work. Pension system contract. Person's got five years to go. He's worked there for thirty. He'd do anything in order to, make sure he gets another five years. He gets pension. The contract is greed to get as much as you can.

OK, this is still on the same track. If someone was injured by not making down, not a major disaster but just minor injuries, like anything from a broken leg to cuts and abrasions, was there someone that had some kind of medical training, like a first aid attendant? Was there someone who had that capability?

Your fire boys. You had blankets but that's it. [Inaudible]. Then came the shirts let's pack it up. Someone had to stole it, right? You were then, they had a phone down the mine. Then as soon as you're injured, then they phoned outside. Then phoned the ambulance, come to the mine and when you get out there, there will be an ambulance and a doctor there. As quickly as get there. Not necessarily a doctor. The ambulance driver, the undertaker. The undertaker had the ambulance. Either one way or the other, right? I know, I've been bandaged; I've had life and death. I took a trip of cars. From the front end I'm driving. I got a hold rope and I walk out. That car went up [inaudible]. But anyhow, oh yeah got in. Safety itself personally, you never wore a hard hat, right? You never wore hard toed shoes. And that was up til 1951. I quit the mines [inaudible]. Mind you, I said my buddy one time I would say body [inaudible]. You got squeezed between the cars and pull rope, about that wide. That sort of got, pushed a foot that car off the track which opened the width.

[inaudible] Strong enough?

No, I would [inaudible] use my ass, not my ears. My ass got of the bathroom [inaudible].

[Inaudible]. That's it though.

No. Have you ever been in a mine?

Never.

Well, you know those lights. First you snapped the ends, then you [inaudible].

That's fine.

We used to have the, I've never worked with a safety net. One time they used to have a safety net. I wondered how they could manage working with that. But I never experienced that. We used to have and old, we had to go to Edison, I'm not sure. That was a poor light. When I was in Drumheller and I worked at Tuff's, he used a car light. But I seen him us what you call a weedwacker. When I come back, he and I got the weedwacker. Do you know, when you went down there and you got eyes back, you could see just as good as you can see in here. It was just a matter of.

Adjusting your eyes.

Yeah, you could see anything and one time I drove a springkie, a street buggy. This was in Drumheller, well the front cone was quite away from my light, so they had a light on here and it just. But if you only got the one horse, you got light easy. But it's the same thing with. You know I could find my way out of any mine if I, where I worked in. Saved my life when I was inside. I could find my way out, would take you a long time. I may be completely dark, but you sense it. You pictured it. I could find my way out, take me maybe a long time but I could find my way out.

You get a sense to where to find the way out.

Were you here when we talked about skeletons, right?

Yes, we did last summer.

I think I know what happened there.

Some were saying that a lot of people say there probably not enough gas.

They got in, as you know, as long as you're going you can see where [inaudible]. You see that light behind me. You ain't going to turn one way and the other. If you turn one way or the other, you're one of those old roads. You minute you use that light, you haven't gotten it. You're not going to go in, are ya? You're going make sure you got that light behind you, right? It wasn't Harewood Mine. It was Picture Mine that come into Harewood Mine. Alright. So we don't find out anything til about ten years after. Now, the inquisitive kid went again about ten years after. They went in and once enough a cave. And they follow that cave and that's where the two skeletons were. You know what happened? Those kids got in the cave right behind the door, and that was it. And as the years go by, it settles a bit, right? Went in that cave, they couldn't get out. These other kids come in and they, it had caved and it had opened out. They pulled away and it was just on the other side of that cave, they found the two skeletons. Now, when it caved, cause there's air circulating in that mine even today. It was said that the mouth of where the old Harewood Mine, you could feel the breeze coming out. When that cave, then if there was any little bit of ventilation going through, it was blocked by that cave. That's what killed those kids. They couldn't get out. That's my honest

opinion. Cause on that other cave when those other kids came in and they worked their way over, curious, they dug away a bit, set maybe about that much in, you know a few years time. That's my honest opinion.

Yes, well, do you remember anything about Chinatown in Nanaimo? Or Cumberland?

Well, There was a big Chinatown in Beban too.

Was there?

Chinatown, Japtown.

I believe they used to have Coontown up there too.

That's in Cumberland. Coontown, Japtown, and Chinktown in Cumberland. And Japtown and Chinktown in Beban. Chinktown here. No, oh yeah, there was actually all Japs on the, down by Johner's Mill. They were all Japs. I tell you what, all I know, I seen Chinatown get on fire and I seen it burn. And I seen it start and I never [inaudible]. It was a sight for sore eyes. I lived not far from it. I used to, Chinatown. And there was another Chinatown. Small scale, down by where the CPR ferry where the Chinamen worked on the warfs. I know there was only one mine. All the mines I worked in, that's the one I had to wash in.

I guess the one was Extension was it?

Yes, it is. Extension had one. It wasn't fit for a pig. Extension had one and it went off. Cassidy Mine [inaudible]. That was of course when we tailor bought had one and had about four people. You just used you where they were driving the slopes. Then the only washout. Then eventually Number Ten had one. There was never, oh yeah, Cumberland had to get but not until more or less union. Granby had it long before union. Granby was a different company altogether. That was a great one. Lots of coal down there. They never used coal. Stands to reason. I know it's forty-five feet high [inaudible]. They'll never get it again. We can't, it's impossible.

You should never underestimate our technology.

Oh, just a minute. Just a minute. You can go in your old work, that's all caves, ok? It's at least six hundred feet deep. Reserve Mine is forty-five feet of crawl area. We went to go in, but they had stripped the pillars. They weakened it, whoever mine boss after you talk about pillars and stalls, you weaken them by driving extra rows to get, you know, coal which put compression on cause the bus used. There's forty-five, when I was there, the minute you opened it, cement foundation on the front of it. You couldn't, so you owned it. There was forty-five, forty-five coal. Protection Mine, you got, let's see, a seam of about that far.

About three feet.

It's under the sea. It's all hard coal. Can't strip mine it, can you?

Yea, well, I don't know what techniques they have today but apparently they're doing this summer sometime, there's a Dutch company taking, spending three million dollars drilling all around Mount Benson.

Yes, that's true. You've gotta go into what you call virgin country. Like say Number Five Mine in Cumberland. There's Cumberland. There's Courtenay Alright, well say Number Five Mine finished here. You can open. All you gotta do is leave a barrier, let's say twenty-five foot barrier, sink another shaft and that's going to tell you more. Same with Number Eight Mine, outside of Beban, same thing. You leave a barrier cause that's all lay full and there's water in there, but it's all cave cause all the workmen caves I told you about before. But there's still places there would be water, right? So you leave a barrier and sink another shaft. Now these two mines who are open now want to, Lorquincin near Campbell River and the other one's up Balbunion. Well that's strip mining, they got strip mine. There's lots of coal here but no way.

OK, I want to ask you a question. What do you remember about the red light district on Fraser Street?

I'll tell ya how much it cost [laugh]. It's all prostitutes. Right. It was two dollars.

I'm not going to ask you anything more than that. But basically what was the social attitude towards the people in the city? Did they, was there all these biddies trying to get rid of it all the time or was it just accepted thing as long as they stayed in their area?

No, it was pretty all right. Now, those girls actually weren't actually allowed in any of our pubs but used to pop into [inaudible]. When they were uptown, they were just looking for a place to prostitute. And they never let on to anybody else what they did. Used to pop into Newcastle pub [inaudible]. Cost two dollars if you want to screw them [inaudible]. Fifty cents for a drink [inaudible]. You didn't order if to use it or not, but it was fifty cents. But they were all in [inaudible]. Some cases, I would say it was a good thing. Big fellas coming in from Rutan, been away three or four months. Better them to go down there than rape a girl. That's my honest opinion. I'd run into, I mean, you know, we were young and we got on and I'd run into trouble so mad you wouldn't expect to see. This guy got wife and five kids and this guy got.

So, people sort of saw it as a deterrent from more violent crimes. As long as it was kept neat and respectable, clean and they stayed in their areas, it was fine. And you know, these people, like it's not today where half of them do this on drugs or something.



Little did people know what happened with [inaudible] drugs and [inaudible]. They only assist me when I was there. Run by the army, by prostitutes [inaudible]. The way, the price was eighty cents. That was run by the army. There's very few, sparse population knows about that, but there's not. That was the only one that I ever run into. I only assisted that day [inaudible]. I hit that guard twice. Nobody was there after nine o'clock.

Ok, that was interesting what you said, so we'll just leave it at that since I can't really think of anything more comparing more with the social acceptability and you know, if it kept being tidy.

Grooms had the wrong women with them. But anyhow.

Ok, yeah. Would you say that there was any social division in Nanaimo? Like you know, someone thought they were high and, high and mighty.

Oh yeah. Oh hell yes. Let's say for instance today. I went to school with kids. Your father might be a fire boss. My father was a miner. You got ten cents for your parking money, I only got five cause your father made more money than my father. So, I couldn't very well go with you cause you'd have to share your other five cents with me. So this is, it was there all right. Then you had the boss's son, a higher boss or a storekeeper's son.

But basically, it wasn't sort of like a bloodline social thing. It was more or less a financial social division. You associated with the people you could afford.

You hardly any robbers, eh?

So basically, you just, you hung around with people that were basically of your economic past because you wouldn't feel like you weren't as good because you couldn't afford to buy two Popsicles when you only could buy one. So it was better to play with someone that everyone could only buy one Popsicle and then no one would feel ridiculous or whatever.

We were different [inaudible]. We would go out in the mines [inaudible]. I'm not putting myself for that old. I mean you were a man. Just like riding a freakie, I was nineteen. You were a man. You done it the hard way. I'm seventy [inaudible]. I only became a Canadian citizen believe it or not five years ago. [laugh].

Really?

Yeah, well I came to this country in 1912 from England, so you figured automatically now. Then I served five years in the Canadian forces. I married an English woman, right, and she, and you figure she's an automatic Canadian through me which I wasn't one either. It only came into effect in '47, see? Then the wife went back to the old country in '48. She take to take out citizenship papers. So she became a Canadian citizen before me. In order for

me to go back to England, I had to take out citizenship papers. So that's about five, six years ago.

Well, is there anything you can think of that you would like to say before we conclude?

Oh, things to say. Like for instance when I had to go up the water pipe. It happened the afternoon shift. [Inaudible]. Reserve.

Reserve?

[Inaudible]. Used to get the water for the Nanaimo River and some salt got into the shaft. So we couldn't get up. So about, stay down there for about an hour and a half, something like that. And bunch of us, the other fellas, decided to walk back into the mine, further in you know, back in from the shaft bottom there was a quad. There was a barn where the animals were and there was full at the shaft bottom and they had a pig stall and they had to fill the barn. So we went in there and we stayed. Then we got a phone call, it was all fixed. Come back, the shaft bottom. The other guy still sleeping. The wood come down, can't get it fixed. Head guy's up there and God knows what. So made a choice. Walk down this winding old road, it was scaled. Had that white fuzz on the post cement. Winding road like this. From this level of down about five hundred feet. I would say five, I don't know. It was scaled. And you could hear the water, just like a big waterfall down there. That was, hoisted up in this big bucket into this one and straight up it got itself outside, eh? Well, that was about five hundred feet deep in this shaft. It's like getting in oil, you know. So, me and my brother, oh there was only about twelve of us so we all got in that tub. Then we phoned, there was a phone down there. Phone, alright, we're all in the cage. Give us so long and close the door. And up we went. By the time we got up you see, all the water splashed on the side. We were soaking wet. So we got up. This would be about two o'clock in the morning, we know we got up and here they got the hoist going. Hoist the other way. [laugh]. That's the part the side of my eyes. I been called out at night and system says patience came to Number Ten Mine for the amount of work. Trying to get into a place where there's little hoist in there. Trying to get that hoist out of there, you know? You came and whatnot. But outside of that.

So, have you ever remembered any major accidents and like cave-ins where people trapped in?

I seen a man killed. I was, me and my brother were working together and my brother would drive on the horse. This was Reserve Mine. One of the minors, there were four of them working together. This one come out to the switch. Instead of me taking the empty car, he come out. Just about up to a snuff, ok? He taken the car, the empty car. He was down on his hands and knees like, to put a block in so the car's won't run away. About twelve feet high. Right on his, squeeze 'em like that. I've seen three. I've seen one in Drumheller. The guy that was hauling the coal there, got there oh so close, eh? [Inaudible]. I could see his hands, so I went and got a machine jack. Jack up block, jack up and the fire boss came.

The fire boss gave me hell about it. About doing it, because I said I'm allowed to do this. I've got a minors ticket. Get it? See, the minor would go in there to make sure that's safe there before you interfere with it. But, I've had bad accidents myself. [Inaudible]. I've only seen two killed. I seen that Chinaman on Jinglepot and I see him dead but didn't see him get killed. I haven't, I've only seen one get killed and that's in the coal mines now. Seen hundreds [inaudible]. I've shot some myself. Only, only seen this one man, the rock, I seen the rock come down and he was looking at it. [Inaudible]. Didn't kill.

Yeah you're fortunate.

[Inaudible]. I've had more since I retired. In the last ten years, I've had an ulcer operation, a back fuse, an operation. A few years ago, I just had a neck fuse. And a piece of shrapnel went into there. That's fused.

Well, I think we pretty well finished and I thank you very much Mr. Dawes. Interesting interview.

Well, there's my father coming home. This is in the old country.