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JL: Your name is Williams?

*Begins?*  
MW: Mabel Williams.

JL: And you were born where?

MW: Carstairs, Alberta.

JL: Day 22, 1909.

JL: And your husband was a coal miner?

MW: Yeh.

JL: And he was born when?

MW: He was born September, 1908.

JL: And where was that?

MW: He was born in the States in ? Pennsylvania.

JL: And can you give me an idea, your husband's name was Evan Thomas Williams, and can you give me an idea how Mr. Williams came here, what route did he take?

MW: Well, his folks went to the States, his father worked in the slave quarters and then he went back to Wales and then they came out here. I understand it was because of his health, his health wasn't too good and they came out to Alberta on these ah Hudson Bay Lines, in the early days in 1929 and then he worked in the mines here and then he found out about this place here on Vancouver Island and he knew some people here and then he came here and then he finally got a job but in those days the mine wasn't working very steady. They had opened this mine in 1913 and ah it had all the machinery and everything in it - had everything ready to go but they didn't work it - the mine wasn't worked.

JL: Which mine was it?

MW: Number 8 mine this is right here. Ya see I don't know how many mines there were. Well there were some in Cumberland, some in Bevan and some here. And this one was Number 8. And this was called the million dollar mystery because they never used it until, I think it was either 36 or 38 - they started up again and that's when people came from Corban, Alberta or B.C. where they'd been on strike ya know and the people that came here, just didn't - it was during the hungry thirties ya know - and they didn't have hardly anything.

JL: So did the mine finally start up?

MW: Yeh, that's when it started up but you were on for 2 weeks maybe then off for 2 weeks at first. That's before I came, I came here in 41 and ya know the year before but we weren't married before we came here.

JL: Was this mine organized, was it a union mine?

MW: It wasn't at first but it was after.

JL: Was your husband involved at all in that kind of organizing?

MW: Well, he was a vey union man but he wasn't on the committee or anything but he was union.

JL: Was it hard for him to get the union here?

MW: I don't know too much about that. First the reason they got the union was because they could hire whoever they want and if they didn't like somebody they could say ya better hit this - there was this Scotchman and he'd say well you'd better pack your tools and go home.

JL: And that was in the thirties eh?

MW: Yeh, but that was before they got the union.

JL: What company had the mine?

MW: Well, it was Canadian Congress <sup>Collieries</sup> to start with ya see, they had mines all over B.C. in Nanaimo, here, Cumberland

MW: I guess you heard about Dunsmuir who found the coal. Well they just ah they formed a company and then they built the railroad, the railroad that's here now, that's what they did.

JL: Have you got any idea, were they mining in Cumberland at the same time? Were those mines running?

MW: No they first started in - I don't know too much about that because I wasn't here then but ah those mines were going before this one.

JL: And were they running when this one opened?

MW: Oh yeh and there was an explosion I think in every mine except this one.

JL: And did your husband ever talk about that?

MW: Yes, but he wasn't - those explosions were before he came here ya see and he didn't come til forties.

JL: And he didn't worry about explosions happening down here?

MW: No, he'd worked in the mines so long that they knew - this was he said that this was one of the best ventilated mines he'd ever been in here as well as the machinery and everything was.

JL: 75

MW: Yeh, and they had a man who lived in this camp here that'd go over every day to run the machinery til they used to keep it from rusting out I guess.

JL: What job did your husband have?

MW: Well, he was a real coal miner - he could do any job in the mine - they had loaders, some would load the coal, some would cut the coal and some would clean up the ..... But he was a real miner.

JL: Were there ever any accidents in there?

MW: A few, not many.

JL: SO the safety record was pretty good?

MW: Pretty good, yeh. In fact they said there was more fatalities in the bush than there was in the mine really. But you see they were all, they would test for gas in the mine and they had a great big fan that was running all the time and if that fan ever stopped they had to get out of the mine because they had to keep the air circulating to keep the gas down. Of course if they knew there was gas in a place they'd had ways and means of curtaining it off in the mine some way, I don't know.. My husband used to tell me about it but I never knew anything about a mine before I came here.

JL: When your husband said that this was the best ventilated did he think that the union was responsible for that or did he think that.....?

MW: Oh no, I don't think the union was ah, I don't know but I guess that was ah the way they operated mines. They had an air shaft, two of them there was two shafts. One you went right down in cars.

JL: How deep did it go to?

MW: I think he said ah (108) more than that I guess but I don't know if they went down that far.

JL: The history of coal mining in this area is very rich and a lot of the explosions for example were caused ah, many fields were caused by unsafe conditions that were allowed before the unions were there to .....?

MW: You'd have to talk to a miner about that.

JL: I'm just wondering, when you came in was there a split at all that you detected in the community.

MW: How do you mean?

JL: Well, there had been some fairly fierce struggle.

MW: Oh, I think that was before we came.

JL: Yeh, and you didn't have a ...?

MW: I know there was something but I couldn't I wouldn't like to say because I'm not sure just how it was. There was ahm I think before the unions came.

JL: Did your husband ever talk about Ginger Goodman? The man who was shot?

MW: I don't know what his name was but I remember him saying something about someone who was shot.

JL: By the time, how long did this mine run then?

MW: IT was closed til from 1938 to 53 - it closed down.

JL: And it's working again.

MW: No, no they took everything out, they dismantled it, they dropped one cage into the shaft I think and it was terrible because that was a well organized mine and there was lots of coal there yet. I guess the company didn't want to keep it up but you know they sold all that stuff for scrap to the yard works in Victoria. They came up and dismantled it, the mine, tore up all the tracks.

JL: And just laid off all the men?

MW: Oh yeh, they were laid off before that. I think it was in the spring of 53 that they got their last day. That was 53.

JL: Were you here, when you first came would you say that that was depression time?

MW: No, it was just the end of the depression anyway and people were just, they didn't have anything hardly and these houses were here. Ya see the company - there was 50 or more of them but a lot of them were torn down and taken or bought them, moved them away the way they were or tore them down but we really the houses were just shells. There was no insulation or anything. We did have water in the house, just a tap and that was supplied from a and we still got our water from a spring. It was a mine prospect, they dug or drilled for coal and they found this one spring and that's what supplied the water for the whole mine and for all this community here.

JL: So these were company houses?

MW: These were all company houses and we paid \$7.50 for monthly rent, free water and free light for until there was so many kilowatts or whatever but we were on 25 cycle then. Then when they made the changeover well then it changed. And they supplied paper and paint for you.

JL: But they weren't very well insulated?

MW: No, they weren't but they were all alike. But now the people that are here now they've bought them you see. But they didn't want to sell the houses they wanted us to move them off and the few that were left in here wanted to stay here so we asked the man in charge if we could buy them well he said it isn't surveyed so they said we'll pay for surveying ya see to do that so we got them for \$700.00 and 120' by 140' lots but then it was just water in there. No plumbing but had electricity.

JL: In the family life, do you have children?

MW: Yeh.

JL: Did you, with your husband being in the coal mining industry did you have any fear for his safety?

MW: Well, not really, I guess if something happened or say like the mine stopped all of a sudden or something you wonder what happened. Of course, you could always <sup>hear</sup> the mine, the fan going over at the mine and as soon as everything would get quiet then you'd know there must be something. As soon as that would stop the men would all get out ya see. But no there really weren't any too serious accidents here. I think there was one man who died as a result of an accident. There maybe have bin more but that's the one I recall.

JL: When you arrived here was Cumberland still a big town?

MW: Ees.

JL: Was it bigger than Courtenay?

MW: IT wasn't then, but I guress it was a long time ago.

JL: I was talking to two women yesterday and they were about 85 and they were grown up in Cumberland and they talked about Courtenay as being a small town.

MW: I wouldn't know. I know that Cumberland was called Union and it had over 2,000 Chinamen in it or something. We had a school, there was a school down here. A 2 room school at the bottom here and it was in operating for about 4 years after I came but our children had to go to Beban until Beban closed down, well that was only up to Grade six then they went to Cumberland.

JL: Was the school here a company school or was it put on by a school board?

MW: No it was put on by the school board.

JL: When you had to market and that sort of thing you would go where?

MW: To Courtenay but when we first came we didn't hardly have to go to town because there was a big store in Beban and he used to come down here 3 times a week to see whether anybody wanted groceries he'd go from house to house. You'd give him your whatever you wanted him to bring for next time and when he'd come he'd bring that and take your order for the next time. And it was the same with Wilcox Meat Market in Courtenay. They did that 3 times a week for your meat and they had some vegetables. Of course there was the Chinamen who used to come around with his truck come around every week with vegetables and fruit.

JL: So it was fairly convenient?

MW: Yeh and then people used to come from Denman Island and Hornby and bring apples. I remember there was a man he used to come around selling fish and this man from Beban that was a grocer - if you wanted anything from the hardware line or anything you could just tell him and he'd get it in Cumberland or something. Well, ya see, very few had cars.

JL: So how many at the peak, what was the size of the community then?

MW: well, there was about 50 families I guess.

JL: And the average family would be about 3 or 4.

MW: Yeh, I guess that would be the average would be - some had more. And there was a little store down here afterwards and the post office was here for awhile but we got our mail in Beban. We used to go to Beban.

JL: Did you have a name for the town?

MW: Punkidge.

JL: It was called Punkidge.

MW: Yeh, this is Punkidge town.

JL: Did you have any kind of government? Did you have a city council or?

MW: Oh no.

JL: Town council?

MW: No.

JL: Did you have a social life, did you have a social hall or?

MW: Well, they could use the school. They used to do things for the children. At Xmas time they used to - every child got a present and quite a nice one too. They'd have a Santa Clause come in.

JL: Was that the company that did that?

MW: No, it was the community, just the community.

JL: So, what would you do for entertainment?

MW: Well, some of them used to have bingo games I guess. I never went to any of those. And sometimes, they'd have some dances.

JL: In the school?

MW: Yes. Not too often. And then of course a lot of people went to the show and it used to be what they'd call photo night.

JL: Photo night?

MW: Photo night, yeh.

JL: That's what they called the show?

MW: No, no. Just a certain night of the week it was called photo night because you could go in and sometimes your name would be called or something, get something for it and they'd have their photo taken and I guess ....

JL: Where would they have the show?

MW: In Courtenay. There used to be a bus that would come around if you wanted to go to town on a Saturday and you'd go on that. It wasn't always that way but it was later on.

JL: Did they still have mules working in the mines?

MW: Yes.

JL: Who handled those?

MW: Mr. Pladen, a man who used to live over on the other street. He was the barn man, the barn walker, and they said he just kept ...269 just better than some people tells you they did - whitewash them and everything, he was very particular. And if the animals got hurt he would stitch them up.

JL: And when did they use those mules , not right up to the end?

MW: Pretty well, I think. They might have had some other means of hauling cars too. I'm not too sure about that.

JL: But you do know that they were using them?

MW: Oh yes, yes. I think if the mine wasn't working they'd take them out. Like if they were on strike or something - they'd take em out and ...

JL: Did they have any major strikes, did you remember?

MW: Yeh, there was one for 3 months one time here. We did get what do you call it? strike pay well it was just vouchers more or less for food. We could go to the grocers.

JL: What was it like then? Did the community pull more tightly together?

MW: They all held together pretty good.

JL: You didn't have a situation where people would work? There were no strike breakers?

MW: No, there wasn't anything like that here.

JL: Do you remember the men talking - what kind of attitude did they have towards the company?

MW: I think they thought it was a pretty good company.

JL: And the issues were usually wages which caused the strike?

MW: Well if there was any money in the funds, I guess they'd get strike pay.

JL: No but I mean why would they be striking, was it mostly wages?

MW: Yeh, I think it was.

JL: Did they have a union hall then?

MW: The company 219...

JL: So they were a local 220.

MW: Yeh, there was that. Ya see these mines, Beban and Cumberland and Union Bay were all...

JL: When your husband first came the mine wasn't organized?

MW: I'm not too sure whether it was organized when we came or just after. I couldn't tell you for sure but I know he used to talk about how some of them would keep some men - who was the boss at the time - would keep some men on and others he wouldn't keep on for no reason really. Maybe he liked some better than others, I don't know.

JL: Did your husband like the work?

MW: Yes, he did. He was a good miner because if there was any, you know sometimes they'd get a bad roof and some of them were scared ya know they'd have to fix it up so it wouldn't ya know whatever they did and they'd usually get him to, not always but sometimes to do something about it. The other men were scared stiff, especially men that hadn't, some of em that came here had never worked in a mine before ya see so they didn't understand. Quite often one of these new ones they'd put him up on 254 ...

JL: Did he ever compare what working in a mine here was like against working in a mine in Wales, was like?

MW: Well, he always said that this was the best ventilated mine he ever worked in. In Wales, they were very deep and he said you could, well, here they wore heavy underwear but there they just wore undershirts and vests. And he said they could wring the water out of them after they got out of there, but not here because everybody worked summer as well as winter.

JL: And they could still work in there?

MW: Yes, because there was lots of air you see, to keep the air circulating and the gases...

JL: That's seems to be the big concern.

MW: Yes.

JL: That's what causes the explosion.

MW: Oh sure it is.

JL: And I wonder if he felt that the worker was just more regarded here than anywhere.

MW: I don't know. I wouldn't really know about that.

JL: Was he ever ill?

MW: Well, he never was very strong. He ah especially on the island here - he felt better in Alberta. Plus he always had colds at first - he had a lot of colds here when he came to the island. It's so damp you know on the coast here. I think he had double pneumonia.

JL: Miners quite often had lung problems.

MW: Yes. He did have kind of breathing problems - I don't know if it had to do with the mine or not but his trouble in the end was his heart. But he never could work steady like other men.

JL: Did you notice, did many of the miners have colds a lot?

MW: Not too much, you know now one thing too, the circulation and they used to work on their knees all the time. They had to wear knee pads and the seam was so low in this mine. That's what was for the worker kinda bad too and there was quite a few men had operations for 434 injury and they had a operation. That's the veins from the brain you know. There wasn't much room for the blood to pass through just like a pinhead or something.

JL: And that's because they had been down...?

MW: Well, I don't know if that was the reason. Quite a lot of the miners had those kind of operations.

JL: Around here?

MW: Some that I knew yeh. I guess you know how you get your legs cramped up, work on them like that and shovel coal. And they'd have short handled shovels because they were on their knees.

JL: How long were the shifts then?

MW: Eight hours.

JL: So he'd go down in the mine at what time?

MW: Well, they all started at seven and they were off at three. And if they were afternoon shift they'd go three to eleven and then night shift was um well it was all 8 hours.

JL: Did they all have shift pay?

MW: No, I don't think so. Oh, there might have been, very little but they got they used to get water money if they got wet, if they really got wet they'd get extra for that wherever they were working.

JL: I've never heard of that.

MW: They called it water money maybe they'd get 50 cents or something but in those days he just got \$5.30 a day.

JL: When he first started?

MW: Yeh, in '38 when he first started and then he kept getting a little bit more until I guess he was getting fourteen dollars a day. That's a day.. But then there was the (005) it didn't cost too much then.

*B side begins here about muffled voice.*  
JL: Did food cost much?

MW: You could eat better then than some do now. You know because, well maybe not now, we always had meat, any kind of meat you wanted.

JL: Even coming out of the depression, did you have generally enough to eat. Was there always plenty of food or?

MW: Well, where I was there was but my husband he was out of work. He rode the rails.

JL: That's when he heard that there was work out here?

MW: Well, no it was through people I knew out here and I met him in Edmonton. That's when I told him about here and he came out here right here to this camp. And then these houses, you see, they were lived in by loggers for quite a bit of the time before the miners came. Oh people they just come in here like walkers and take the doors and take the light fixtures and everything else and some of the houses didn't even have floors in them and just partitions up. People would take stuff out. And so when they were going to start up again then they'd have to get these houses all in repair. And there was men - 2 carpenters, that used to live in Courtenay (28-29) Then when my husband got a house but he had to wait for the carpenters to fix it up. There were you know just bare boards inside. No tarpaper in between you could see through. Then they gave you grade paper, heavy building paper and they put that on the walls first before they put the wallpaper on and sometimes there would be a bang and a crack and it'd be coming down from the ceiling. Because the ceilings were all rejoining. Some of them you know you could fix em up pretty nice. If you had of course this was since, but a lot of the people ah I mean in those days even with their help paper and other paper and paint they had them looking nice. They didn't look much from the outside cuz the paint had all worn off.

(Shows her a picture) "That was the pantry and the kitchen and the bedroom. All the windows were the same. Two of those big things in every bedroom and one in each side here"

JL: It's almost a bungalow isn't it?

MW: Yes. The houses were all alike every one. (Shows picture of mine) This is called the kipple where the coal came out. And see the railroad track went right by there on the other side. There's cars and these cars would come along here and you could dump the coal. This was taken from the top. This is a logging road now and it used to be a railroad.

JL: Did it get pretty cold? IF the insulation wasn't too good.

MW: No, we had a heater in here and a stove out there and we used to keep the bedroom door shut and stay in here most of the time if it was really cold. One time the pipes froze and my husband had to go over to the mine to get them to fix some pipes for him. But that wouldn't happen too often.

JL: What would happen if you had for example something with the children an emergency.

MW: Oh, we had doctors you know that came out here. In Cumberland the hospital that used to be there was built by the miners and across the road was where the doctors were. Every week one doctor came on Tuesday the other one came on Thursday, right out here he'd go to Beban he'd come here and there was some people in camp that kept track of who wanted to have the doctor. You'd go down and tell them and then when the doctor came he'd go there first and find out what you wanted. Well then he would come and see you and this one doctor especially he'd you see the train used to bring the men from Cumberland, pick them up at Beban and bring them over here to Number 8 and he'd try to get back so he could put this medicine on the train for the afternoon shift and they'd bring it up and someone from the mine would bring it over if you weren't there if there was some medicine you needed.

JL: How many men would be working at this mine at its peak?

MW: You'd have to ask the miners, I don't know.

JL: A couple of hundred?

MW: Oh yes, more than that. You see there'd be some on every shift. It never stopped.

JL: There were quite a few people came from Cumberland.

MW: Oh yes, there used to be a Number 5 Mine working when I first came in Cumberland. But then after that it closed down and I think those miners came to Number 8. Beban was a mining camp just like this but now it's nothing hardly, ya know, the houses are all gone and they'd stop there and pick those men up.

JL: Did the men ever talk about why they thought the mines were closed down?

MW: Maybe the company had something else in mind, I don't know. But they opened that sable river mine which was just a little hole in the ground. It was a - my husband always said that that would have been a pretty good mine if they would've worked it the right way but they're always working to get out something out right away. If they'd a worked it better, got it ready for, it would have been a better mine.

JL: They weren't using the right production technique?

MW: Yeh.

JL: It worked through the war years?

MW: Yes.

JL: Was that pretty high production?

MW: Well, there was people came here to get away from going to the war ya know. If they went to the mine they didn't have to go. And the miners got special rations too like tea and coffee and extra meat rations I believe. When we had rations, white sugar and butter and I forget now what else and meat.

JL: Then it was after the war that they started to go downhill?

MW: Well, it was 53. Well it went pretty good then for several years. The men would of stayed I guess if the mine would have worked.

JL: Did your husband move to another mine from here?

MW: No, first of all he worked out at the base for awhile, whatever he could get. And then no, he worked up at the Argonaut Mine. There was an iron ore mine up there just between here and Campbell River and he worked there for a year or so. He got whatever he could. Then he did work at Sabel River for a couple of years. And after that a friend of his asked him to go with him opening up a mine up in Prince George in the ? Valley and he worked there until he wasn't able to anymore because my husband was blind from before. And the eye specialist said or the optometrist said that technically he was blind before the son was born.

JL: Did that have to do with being in the mine?

MW: I don't think so. I think that was hereditary because his mother had it. It was the generation of the Maculda. If there had been anything else they could have done something for him but that's something at the back of the eyes.

JL: So did he have a pension from the mine?

MW: No he got 185 the pension from the mine, some got it and others didn't. But he had the blind pension.

JL: All the years he put in the mines he didn't have much money coming out of that in terms of pension?

MW: No.

JL: What about when he was sick, when he was working in the mines? When he couldn't go into the mines was there compensation or sick pay?

MW: Oh, not for anything like that. You'd get compensation if you were hurt, you know, if they thought that you needed it. It's pretty hard to get compensation sometimes really. He didn't have compensation. He hurt his knee and he had to get the cartilage removed once. It was caused I think from being on his knees all the time.

JL: But if he was sick for a day or two then he just didn't get paid?

MW: Oh no, he didn't get paid for that. It's not like these others - some companies.

JL: Did he take very much sick time?

MW: No, he just took it off when he didn't he couldn't go. I know he was sick therre for a long time. At one time he was off for a long time and the miners they took up a collection. We used to go into Cumberland at that time to the bank to get our pay and someone was outside there with a box or something standing outside the bank trying to put some money in. They'd do that for someone.

JL: They really pulled together then?

MW: Yeh.

JL: Did you ever go to union dances?

MW: No, we never went to dances.

JL: What bout church, did they have a church here?

MW: Well, there was a Sunday School, they used to come from town and the people from the gospel hall would come out and have Sunday School out here for the children and then some of them would go to Beban on Sunday afternoon when there was a picnic or anything they'd come around with the bus and pick the children up and take them. There was a lot of nice things down here going on.

JL: I get the 233 that people just would go together

MW: Yes. And all the children would go to Sunday School.

JL: Were there other ethnic groups? Were there many Chinese miners here at the time?

MW: They didn't have the Chinese working in the mine after one of those explosions where there were quite a few Chinese in the mine. They didn't work underground but they worked on the railroad. They used to fix the tracks or lay tracks and do things like that.

JL: They didn't work...?

MW: No, they didn't have them working in the mine after that. One, I don't know which explosion, but there was a lot of miners killed.

JL: Why was that, were they allowed to or did they choose not to or were they not allowed to go down?

MW: I don't really know how that was, I just know they didn't work in the mine. Maybe they were not so used to mining or something, I don't know.

JL: But there wasn't any?

MW: Not that I know of. They just worked on top like on the railroad mostly. They keeping it - laying tracks at the mine or wherever you needed and fix em and like railroad men. And then there were Chinamen too who - at first we just had a cesspool, we had a sink and everything for the water to run out, -there was no plumbing or anything - but they would keep your cesspools in repair. Two men would come out and one was a Chinaman. And they'd bring their lunch and he had a tobacco can and he had a bunch of stuff in there he'd cooked up before I guess. He wanted to know if he could put it on the stove just the can and set the can on the stove.

JL: Was there still quite a number of Chinese in Cumberland when you first came?

MW: Oh yes, because Chinatown was still there ya see. There was quite a few left and my daughter went to school with one of the Chinese girls - she used to write to her some-times but she hasn't heard from her in a long time. But they were just like everybody else.

JL: What about the Japanese, were they in the mine?

MW: I know there was a Jap town, they called it Jap town. There were quite a few Japs too I guess, ya see I didn't live in Cumberland.

JL: But I'm wondering if they ever work out too?

MW: I don't know. I know they had saw mills but when that scare came on the West Coast then all the Japanese had to go. I think that was the most cruel thing.

JL: And they moved them out of there?

MW: Yeh. And some of them never lived in Japan. There was no need for it at all. You know there's a Chinese and Japanese cemetery in Cumberland.

JL: Do you think the reason the Chinese weren't allowed underground - do you think they were blamed for the explosions or were they bad luck. Do you remember hearing anything?

MW: No, I never heard nothing like that. I don't, of course some people are superstitious I suppose.

JL: I don't know why they wouldn't be down there?

MW: Ya know I really can't answer that. If you'd ask some older miners and people that lived here for years. Like the partner my husband used to have, Charlie Tobocca, he's not living anymore but his son is. They are Italians but this Charlie Tobacco he could, well his son too could tell you something that you wanted to know.

JL: Does he live around here?

MW: He lives in Cumberland.

JL: And his son's name.

MW: They call him Chuna, I don't know why they call him that. He, everybody knows him anyway because the Tobaccos have lived there for years but he was my husband's partner and he used to tell him a lot of things about the early days and about the Japanese dentist who would pull your tooth and put another one in and they were really good and different things like that.

JL: This Chunah, he's still living in Cumberland?

MW: In Cumberland.

JL: And his father was a storyteller then? He'd talk about the old times then?

MW: Well, I don't know if you'd call him the storyteller but I guess they'd talk about the early days and he was one of the first maybe of the earlier people.

JL: There was a small Italian community?

MW: Oh, there was lots of Italian people in Cumberland.

JL: Well, I'll follow up on that.

MW: I don't know of anyone else. Who did you interview in Cumberland?

JL: Well, just Mrs. McIntyre and...and they've bin there all their lives, they were born there. Their parents were there earlier.

MW: If you'd see somebody like that he might be able to tell you somebody that could tell you more too/

JL: We have 5 people who are out interviewing right now. We have quite a number of people. Francis...

MW: Francis Senior.

JL: Yeh.

MW: There's Marootchys too but I don't know - Marochs - spelling.

JL: Millie Robertson's one.

MW: Oh yes, she's a real old timer. She was my daughter's kindergarten teacher. And my daughter was in the first kindergarten class in Cumberland. Their picture was in the paper here a number of months ago.

JL: How would you clean the clothes that the men wore?

MW: Oh, just wash them.

JL: Was it a difficult thing to work with?

MW: Not really, when my husband worked up at that iron ore mine it was far worse to get the dirt out and that was an open mine. No I don't think so, my husband used to talk about dirty miners but I think they were cleaner than anybody else because they had to bath every day.

MW: And before there wasn't any wash houses over there at first either you know, when we first came. And so I'd get the wash boiler on the stove and get the water hot and it had a big brown cup and put it on the floor. That's the first thing he did when he got home was have a bath.

JL: And did you just scrub with a scrubboard before you had a washing machine?

MW: Yeh, I did and then the people, by the name of Pearce that used to have a furniture business in town and they used to supply just about everybody with furniture in these camps and it was all on time and they didn't order....

JL: How long were you here before you had a washing machine?

MW: Oh not even a year because this Miss Pearson, her father had the store and she came out one time and here was the washing machine, she said, ther'es no need for you to be doing this. I'll send Mr. Galloway out, Mr. Galloway sold the machines but they had it all in connection with them. And she said I'll send Mr. Galloway out so here he comes in the afternoon with a machine all ready.

JL: What would you pay for the machine.

MW: Well, with the machine we got a ladder, a step-ladder and a rack to put your tubs on or a cable.

JL: Why would you need a step-ladder?

MW: No but this was just....

JL: Oh, it was just a bonus?

MW: Yeh, the step-ladder and this folding table to put your tubs on when you wash and there was something else I think. Seems to me there was 3 things. So for \$6.00 a month we got that. We paid \$6.00 a month for that machine. But what I was going to tell you about, yeh, well it was \$99.00 I think altogether. Would that be right? I think that'd be about right. (23) It was a 25 cycle. So when the 60 cycle came in well then you either had to get another machine or get a new motor.

JL: It was a wringer?

MW: Oh yes.

JL: And you did it by hand before then?

MW: Oh yes.

JL: My grandmother had a washing machine that was wood, it was like a wooden barrel and it had a lid on it and we used to just turn it.

MW: We had one at home that turned the wheel like this and then the thing on top would go back and forth to make the dolly go or like this.

JL: The work clothes did you mostly make or...?

MW: Oh no, you bought those, you could buy them. And another thing that some of the miners; I know one fella that he didn't have any work clothes and he went into Labor's Store down here and he got work clothes and they said is there anything else and he got some you know, better clothes, he got a whole outfit there on time. And that's the way they did it - Beban and Cumberland and I guess other places. And I think there was only once you know it always happens but maybe one or so that beat it and didn't pay. BUT in those days you didn't have any special rate you had to pay. If you could give them a dollar they'd say thank you in those days. As long as they knew you were making an effort because..

JL: What about your groceries? Did you do the same thing?

MW: Well, Len had a store here - we charged them from pay to the other and we used to get our pay over here at the mine. The pay would come out - every 2 weeks they'd bring the money out in envelopes - the cash in envelopes. Well you got a slip at the mine and you'd have to give the slip and they got the money and people coming back from the mines the first thing they'd do is go down to the store pay their bills and then they could start and order some more. They were pretty honest. You know my husband said about this one woman that went to, this was before I came I guess, they had to get their pay in Cumberland then; and the people from here would give her their pay slips and she'd come back with I don't know how many envelopes of loose money, you know I mean just cash in envelopes and you'd never think nothing of it to give it to somebody like that.

JL: Because nobody worried?

MW: No because they're all the same people you know, they did the same work, everybody trusted the others.

JL: There wasn't a police force?

MW: No. At first they had they used to bring the envelopes out and then I think something happened one time. After that the police car was always behind the other car. The paymaster would could out from Cumberland and bring the money and every time the 2 cars would come in case something happened. I think one time one man did get his case? stolen out of his locker. Most of them, I think they were pretty honest people.

JL: Would almost everyone have gardens?

MW: No not too many had gardens. Well, ya see it was all stumps and trees and everything you had to really work to get...we had a great big stump like that out in the middle of our garden. We blew it out with powder after a number of years.

JL: Was there much hunting and that sort of thing?

MW: I guess there'd be some that would do it. Oh yeh, and then another thing the coal - well we used to get our coal, everybody'd order their coal and when they got enough for a carload then there'd be somebody come and deliver it for you.

JL: So that was your fuel that's how you...

MW: Yes, yes, and then there was some that didn't buy the coal, they'd go and pick the coal off the belt, ya know, there'd always be coal in with the rock that was thrown out, dumped. I knew lots of people picked coal.

JL: That was free?

MW: Oh yeh if they wanted to go to the dump.

JL: A coal burning stove is that a....?

MW: Yeh, just coal wood stoves, you could burn wood if you wanted. But this coal wasn't really domestic coal really. It was more of a steam coal I guess or something but there was lots of 99 and rock and stuff. And you had to give it lots of air to get it burning. It wasn't really the best coal.

JL: Did you use ~~that~~ for cooking?

MW: Yes, we would. Wood mostly, cedar mostly for kindling.

JL: (105)?

MW: Oh yeh, we had electricity then and they'd have one plug in. There was one here, there wasn't anything in the bedroom. Your lights hung from the ceiling and you pulled the string. They weren't on the wall or anything. There was a hotel at Beban. You've heard of Beban Lodge? Well that was the hotel but it's bin fixed up a lot since then and that was mostly miners that boarded there, single miners I think. And that had a lot of 117-188. You'll see them in Cumberland a lot of these same places. There's one place they called Jerusalem I don't know where it is but they had all different kinds of names for them. Townsite I guess, up near the park, across from the park, all the houses across the road from the park. All those houses. 124. were company houses but all of course have been renovatèd now.

JL: What about the pubs? Did the miners go in as a group or. ?

MW: Oh I don't know, I guess the people that lived there were in them quite a bit too. NO I don't know whether they did.

JL: Did women go in much at all?

MW: No. I suppose I don't know. I guess they would. But that was you know they had the hotel then, but I think it was mostly miners ~~that~~ would go there. (138)