

Transcription of Interview with Mr. Frank White.

B. 1904.

Father was from Springhill. he was born in Springhill (although he isn't too sure). his father's father was killed in the explosion

his grandfather's name is on the memorial to the miners and his father's is killed in the first war so his name is on the war memorial.

he was working in No.7 mine.

his mother was also from Springhill.

mother were Mitchells and father were Whites. Mollays on her mother's side from Stellarton.

connection with Stellarton.

only got to grade five.

started work at 16. got job in No.7. first job in the mine--'chovelling down'

use your feet--on the canvas. some miners used their feet, but others didn't.

paid \$2.70 a day for this work. started work a. 1920

'Stupid, I guess'--that's way he didn't go further in school.

born in the Rows.

Different styles of company housing. some slanted rooves on Queen St. and long slant on them. they intended to put in another street but didn't. Different styles from King and Queen--some are flat-roofed, others are not.

'Even a lot of the bosses' families lived in company housing'--when they were setting up the companies.

five children in the family.

--used to swim a lot down the lake, pick berries. do the chores--get the coal in.

No.7 was wet and cold--surface water there. 'fellows didn't mind it. You had to live and that was part of the job.'

was at No.7 when they switched--No.7 was mostly all long wall--they started that way. 'To me, it was an easier way....'  
--tacks of timbering and other things much simpler, in long wall. '

sheets laid on the pavement; others had long wall pans.

18 ft. long place, and cut was 6 feet in. clean off your part of the wall.

when he became an overman he no longer belonged to the union.

he cared about the union--he went to the meetings. like everyone else, he takes union as a matter of course. he sided with the UMW over the AMM.

--always was a Liberal.

he boarded at home right the way through.  
slack time in summer, steady work in the winter.

worked in Cape Breton after the bump--three years, he enjoyed it down there.

'I never had any regrets about working in the pit, never had any regrets about it....Pit was a good place to work. Nobody bothered you, a hell of a lot. You done your work and then...that's just about all there was to it.'

'Lots of fun there sometimes....Talking, joking, everything.'

got through with only one bone broken in the pit.

--likes to talk about the

no oilcloth on the floor, just wood.

just eat bread and molasses--no butter. you'd get up eating bread and molasses and you'd go to bed eating bread and molasses--no butter.

women get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, get the fires on. husbands go to work, then get back at 4 or 4:30 in the afternoon.

his father was captain of the Liberal party.

his father was ward captain his ward--Ward Three. Ward Three covers all west of Church St. in Springhill--Church St. has town hall on it. used to have 1400 voters in Ward Three--now only 1130.

a lot of modern Springhillers work in Amherst.

Baptist family.

you didn't take a girl from Herritt Road home after a date. if a guy from that end of town would take a girl home, they'd beat him up. "That went on for years and years and years."

had the reputation of being the "tough guys" of town.

by the time he entered the mine they had just done away with bord and pillar and with the horses.

those days they changed the system over to compressed air haulage system--an endless rope system, that pulled the cars into the working face.

man by compressed air.

--he joined the AMW, Harlan Pettigrew, Jimmy Johnston, Scotty Symes, also members Bob Stewart came into Springhill from Cape Breton to organize it.

--thinks they had 500 UMW and 500 AMW--half and half.

'Reason I joined the AMW, because I felt at that time that our dues, union dues, would have stayed here in Nova Scotia. And the way it is, under the UMW, it was all going into the United States....And when we did come out on strike, they wouldn't send us enough back in to support us during the time the strike was on....It was a pretty good union [the AMW].'

--UMW had to do some "crooked work" to survive.

--some of the UMW officers lost their homes over the suits brought forward by AMW activists, like Pettigrew.

[c.1936-7].

'They wouldn't speak to each other. Fathers and sons were fighting each other. Some fathers belonged to one union and their sons belonged to another union.'

--he was the only one of his family that was in the AMW--his father was in the UMW, but he didn't really care.

'There was maybe a little pro-Communists among the bunch of them'--his assessment of radicalism of AMW.

--most from CB to organize here. that didn't help matters. Springhillers were always against the CBers--"The Cape Bretoners went back to work and left us holding the bag [during the big strike], and we never forgot that, see?"

--we was the only union paid-up--the CBers were not paid up.

sent p.c. tax directly to the union treasury in U.S.--never sent dues to Higgins in Glace Bay--sent them directly to UMWA in Washington.

involved in the CCF in the 1930s. always paid dues into the CCF party.

--Jack Crumie came within 150 votes of taking the seat. Florence Whelton pulled a lot of votes too.

--was there a connection between AMW and CCF? no, he can't say that. "It wasn't really over politics." [the split]. [he really emphasizes the dues aspect.]