

Transcription of Interview with Mrs. and Mr. Ernest Legrow, Springhill.

[Mrs. Legrow, born Dec. 24 1900.]

[b. in her present house in Springhill. miner as a father.

'As far as we knew and all, the Church was our life. There wasn't anything else. There wasn't none of your dances.'

Mr. Legrow: "Those times Sunday was Sunday, there wasn't no ballgames...we had to cut our timber Saturday night...get ready for Sunday, couldn't do it on Sunday.

Methodist family., Wesleyan. They still take religion very seriously and their children do, too.

He used to travel the mine, and take all the men's timber they used--he kept track of it. What was it like.

John R. Simpson, overman. He'd fill out reports, If there was a strike, he worked.

Mr. Legrow's father was a regular coal miner. Her father worked 11 o'clock. Most of her father's men were shiftmen--doing timbering, etc.

Mr. Legrow also born in 1900.

1909-11. Memories.

Mrs. Legrow: 'My father worked right through that.' Mr. Legrow: 'Those times, everybody in town probably had a cow and some hens and a pig and all, and a big garden. You don't do that, now.'

--community: had a big pasture, the other end of the common there (near the present water tank)--everybody pastured their cows there. (Mr. Legrow).

'Us kids used to get paid for taking those cows home and taking them back to pasture.' (Mr. Legrow).--

Mrs. Legrow: "Years ago, a good many people were Newfoundland people--he's Newfoundland, I wasn't--but it didn't matter if it was Newfoundland or not, everybody went out and helped everybody....Everybody worked together."

Mr. Legrow: "Years ago, if you were building a barn or something, all your neighbours was there with their hammers, ready to go to work."

--Mr. Legrow's father first came from Newfoundland to the Joggins, came to Springhill from the Joggins.

--Mrs. Legrow: "Everybody owned their own homes, nearly everybody. After they first went in to rows or company houses, but they weren't there long--I always lived here, I was born here...."

--company houses on the Southampton road, near the school as well.

--and some on Chapel Street, too?

--Mrs. Legrow's mother was head of the WCTU in Springhill. c.1901.

Mr. Legrow on Mrs. Legrow's mother: "She lived in the church."

Mr. Legrow started in the mine when he was 14. He wouldn't go to school. started to work at the 3300. worked at it until it was down to the 6900. First job he had was turning the fan, then he worked as a trapper. Turning the fan: the men were cutting a place up a hill, and you had this fan to get the air up to them. Like turning a grindstone, eight hours a day. You didn't do steady eight hours. "If you got tired and stopped, then after awhile, the guy would holler up from there, 'Come on, turn the fan on.'"

"You'd never think of being scared once you were down there."

Mrs. Legrow: "They used to use terrible language down there, most of the men...."

Mr. Legrow worked in the 4500 west level--that's where we got the bumps. "I didn't like that. I seen a lot of men killed there and helped to dig them out, carry them up."

--after that they started longwall--started 1914--and remembers town during the war.

Trapper BOY: "It was a good job--you just sit down there on your behind all day and pulled the ropes open for the door, when a train of boxes was coming out. You had horses at that time in the mine."

--you'd hear the boxes coming on the rails. sometimes trapper went to sleep. Had a lamp.

Do you remember the strike of 1915? 'The union paid a little bit of money, but not very much.' At that time they had the Kettle Mine on the south end of the town--Kettle Mine. Men hauled the coal over the hill by horse and bagged it up in burlap bags. Brought it up a bag at a time.

"They had the Provincial police here." His father was arrested and taken to Amherst. He was out the next day or two.

On the Kettle Mine: (Mr.Legrow)

"The police had to come down a big hill--all hill, for about a mile long, and men had somebody watching. When they seen them coming, they'd go in the woods, the Kettle Mine was right in the woods there. They'd all dash right in the woods."

--Mr.Legrow as a boy helped to haul the coal over the hill.

--both Legrows do not see this as stealing: Mrs. Legrow remarks, "You had to have it."

--Mrs.Legrow says both families were the type to make provision for coming years--buying apples by the barrel, sugar by the barrel, etc.etc.

new Church built in 1913.

Minister wouldn't say too much about the strike while it was going on.

Strike when he left the mine. 1921 or 1922, bumps going on.
Left for the States.

Mr. Legrow used to work for his father, done different jobs in the mine.
worked in the same place. worked as butties.

both paid by the ton.

taught by his father.

timbering in the mine.

left for the West in 1921--wanted to get married, but didn't have any money.
went on the Harvest. wanted some quick money. Good pay in it.'everybody in Springhill went on it.'

away from Springhill for 18 years--came back in 1937.

Was working as a mechanic in a garage--also built a garage when he came back to Springhill.

Scott Act--Mrs.Legrow thinks Springhill was a fairly dry place back then.

Mrs.Legrow: "We didn't know what liquor was....We had our socials, we had our Sunday School classes--boys' and girls'--we had house parties, we had walks, the miners had a picnic in...took everybody on the train for a picnic...
...There was a crowd of girls and a crowd of boys...."

Mr.Legrow on his spare time: "I had to work. I always had that big garden--father had about two acres of land, always a big garden--in summer time, I had to work."

Q.Wasn't that a hard way to grow up?

A.Yeah, but it didn't hurt me any.

wages as a trapper: \$2.52 a day, eight hours. (check this).

eight people in Legrow's family--

Legrow: He approves of the union.

Remembers Hayes, Kimberley, Tattrie.

'Hey, that's a case for Tattrie' if anybody was in trouble.

very clannish, very very clannish--Mrs.Legrow's description.

'It wasn't the men's fault--the strikes....'

The union spoiled the miners here--Mr.Legrow.

'UMWA--sold them down the river. Lost every condition the miners had for years and years before that.'

--sold them down the river the last four or five years they were working in the mine, there.

--bad pension agreement.

'Some fellows worked out in that mine there for forty, fifty years and got nothing.'
(Legrow).

'They don't seem to realize that men are human or something, you know?'--Mrs.Legrow on the subject of the miners' troubles in getting adequate compensation.

'It's really a wonder that people did as well as they did with the little they had.'
(Mrs.Legrow)

Legrow's father retired around 1920. He was in a big bump, 'it seemed to give him an inclination for to stop.And he didn't come back any more.'

Mrs.Legrow on the coal company: "They took, a mean way about it, too...People had to have fuel"--comment on the arrests of the men at the Kettle Mine.

Ernest Legrow: "Archie [terris] was a pretty nice gentleman."

in the old days, the Legrows thought the majority of people supported temperance more than they do today.

78

[Off the record, Mrs. Legrow said that there was a 'poorer class' of people in Springhill, who lived "in the rows"--King Street and across from their home.

The children of this class were always dirty, but "perhaps they didn't have the means."