

Transcription of Interview with Caleb Rushton.

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b.1923.

father born 1887, in Westc hester, Cumberland Co.

Warren Rushton. he had lived in Springhill a short time, moved to Oxford; came back to Springhill the last time to stay, around 1918 or 1919.

mother born North Greenville.

more of a rural background.

quite a number of years after he was born they kept a cow. making buttermilk right in a churn--didn't leave farming altogether.

"He didn't leave farming altogether--he kept a little bit of it in his heart, an' also in his hands, because he kept a garden for years until he was unable to look after it."

lost a cow in one of the "trial pits" around springhill--pits dug to see if coal was there.

grew up on the Herritt Road--born there, were there until he was 9 years old. then moved down to Terrace st.

lived on Cowans St., Crossin St., Terrace St.

--battles between play-mates and other people.

'Kids from other side of town were just as rough on the Herritt Roaders.'

--two or three families from Herritt Road would beat up anybody from other parts of town.--people from the town would beat up on the Herritt Roaders when they went into dances.

'It was just their way of life, I guess. They were brought up in this environment, I suppose.'

'Some of them liked a little brawl now and again to liven things up.'

--some of these fights were serious--faces marred for life and things like that.

friction among kids contributed to by some kids having a bit better money.

--lived right next door to troublesome family.

--started work as a labourer. prior to coming to Springhill he worked in the iron mines in Londonserry. he wasn't there that long.

--worked at Oxford at the woollen mills there.--worked at a carpentry or wagon shop there.

--company was paying the biggest wages of anybody around there.

--paying better than any other work.

--you could work there year round and you always had money coming in.

started out as a surface labourer--packing timber for the miners, at that time they had company houses and labouress would work on them--wintertime shovelling snow off the railroad to keep the line clear for the coal cars, shovelling paths for the workers, etc.etc.

'The miners and the tradesmen--like hoist drivers and the machinists and these people--but the miners and the people who worked outside were all paid a basic labour rate.' [he doesn't mean miners].

once the union came in, wages did get better. 'The only thing in Springhill that you can make any amount of money at.'

--everything else at a much lower rate of pay.--withthe unions you knew you were going to get a little more.

'We didn't have any real standard of living. I would say we were among the po or.'

general labourer's wages didn't go so far.

all got to grade 11.

parents all wanted them to get their high school out of it.

father not a strong man--neither is his son.

dad was quite religious--joined the Salvation Army and became a cadet... changed over to the Church of the Nazarene, and from there he went to the Baptists.

still is a Church of the Nazarene in Oxford.

Nazarenes had quite a little following here, but it has dwindled off.

walked in from the Herritt Road to the Church of the Nazarene.

he is a Baptist. can't get people to act as deacons--people stay on for years and years.

doesn't think there are many worse people today than there were. you didn't have what was going on years ago. [Big moral difference in the quantity of information].

'To the church people it was a big issue.' [Temperance].

--his brother went overseas and got drunk.  
--impact of war on this temperance movement!

Temperance movement "chased people behind doors." He thinks it's better today when at least it's out in the open.

prevalence of bootleggers.

father never talked politics.

father leaned to the Conservative side.

'He tried to live by the Bible. And if you do that, of course, you're not going to get involved with a lot of other stuff.' [This comment rises in discussion about politics.]

got a job tending wash-house. slight raise in pay. had to clean up the floors, take the soap out of the dishes, disinfect, etc.

went from there to fill in at the company office. big square building on the corner of McDougall and Main Street.

--he said, for years and years and years, he would never go down the mine. 'However, when you get a family, and you're trying to find a job to give you some money, and you haven't got any job, any of the jobs that you can get are mediocre with little pay, you're going to go where the money is.'

started in the mines in 1947 'Mom made it quite plain that she didn't want me to go down the mines.'

--stores were paying \$10, \$7 a week--rest of the stores were pretty low. was working at a hardware store before he went in the army. tried construction work.

--first put in a bad place in the mine--didn't know what was going on. put him with a fellow who couldn't teach.

'I was scared to death of the mines from the time I started in them until I got out of them.'

--he endorses theory of lining up the walls as a contributing factor to the bumps. early bumps in 1958--injured a couple of people. (

--in other mine--No. 4--people tried to tell them not to do what they did. 'But of course, being the company and the owners of the mine, they went ahead and did it anyway.'

--put the main electric cable down the main slope. should have been put down the fan slope.

his explanation: "As the old saying goes, 'Money talks.'"

can't figure out why they were let off so easily--let out of Springhill without having to do anything for the people of Springhill.

'...they were looking for an out, and this gave it to them.'

'When No. 4 exploded, they closed it up without even thinking about it. And they were just looking for an out. And once that bump happened, that was it.'

--could have left No. 2 and not try to get the deep coal out.

'I still maintain that if they'd kept these walls the way they were before, they wouldn't have had these serious bumps. They would have had bumps. They were always going to have bumps, as long as they were down that depth they were bound to have bumps. But they weren't going to have the serious bumps.'

--Rushton was trapped for  $6\frac{1}{2}$  days--that's when he decided to get out of mining.

got married 1937.