

TRANSCRIPTION OF Interview with Richard McCaveney.

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B. Dec. 9 1901.

Queen Street, Springhill.

father owned his own home.

father came from Maryland--went to Cape Breton and married his mother in Cape Breton. Lingan, near New Waterford. coal mining families.

his mother's father came from England to be manager of the mine at Lingan--surname of Wilson.

his father was underground manager at No.2. then went to No.7, then came back to No.2. pretty secure standard of living. 'We didn't have a lot but we never went hungry.'

He told his children that they shouldn't go in the mine. 'Hard life, mining.'

two first-class machinists and one maintenance man (Richard) as his sons.

'I remember that we wasn't even allowed to stop on the street any place and play marbles or nothing. The police was in here. There was two fellows stopped on the sidewalk, even to talk, they come along [and say], 'Get moving,' you wasn't allowed to stand or anything....You could walk, but you couldn't stand....'

--his father worked right through the strike. the officials all worked.

--he sympathized with the men, but "underground manager wasn't allowed to say anything."

his dad never stopped working anytime until he retired.

nine in his family.

five boys, four girls.

girls became school teachers, stenographers.

boys resisted pressure to go to college.

he was on repair work for 42 years. 'I got on it and I couldn't get off it.'

--plant was full of lines that were air-lines and steam-lines. 'Not everybody could do my job. Never the same thing any day.'

--had to repair all the broken machinery. had to repair machinery enough to keep it going until the weekend. Didn't hoist coal on Saturday or Sunday, so when the weekend came, you could effect major repairs. started work 1917, worked straight through for 42 years.

worked in Aherst at a plumbing and heating outfit--after the Bump. Also worked at plant in Springhill.

was engineer awhile at the hospital--firedoors. earned his welders' papers.

would get home at night, and would get a call to come right back into work--and would have to work all night. perils of the xxx maintenance worker.

AIN affair: 'There was no rough stuff at all', he says of the night they marched Harlan Pettigrew out of town. 'They just marched him out--he was glad to get out.'

'If you didn't have a union behind you, you were in trouble.'

they tried to get taverns here but they didn't.

'The Company didn't care how you voted or anything else.'

his father was a Conservative, and Richard has voted for Guy Brown the last two elections.

'We had some lovely teachers here.'

two sisters taught school for years.

teachers used to wallop the kids.

father gave him a really rough time over quitting school.

--wished he could have gone back to school as soon as he was out.

--family were Presbyterian.

went to Sunday School every Sunday.

--remembers that the churches did not all get along in Springhill.

'You just couldn't mix in with the Roman Catholics at all!'

'A lot of people didn't like the Roman Catholics.'

his best friend was Catholic.

Oddfellows and Masons. (father)

he is an Oddfellow.

mother went in 1943, father died in 1933.

father 67 when he died, mother 76.

'We would never talk pit or nothing to us.'

air hoists were the worst for breaking down--used for hoisting coal from the different levels. getting levels ready to start a new wall. difficulty in setting valves on them.

'The big officials were good. It was only the little fellows who tried to push you around. And you didn't have to take that anyway.'

--Earl Paul was called 'Earl' when you met him around the mine--after he became superintendent.

--you never 'Mistered' anybody in this town. 'There were no 'misters' in this town.'

--there would be a few misters, but they wouldn't be working in the pit: ministers, so on. but no body in the pit.

--when he left the pit, he left it (his father). 'Never talked pit at home.'

--the Liar's Bench. 'That's where they all gather and tell stories.'