

Transcription of Interview with Mrs. Harry Rushton,
Springhill.

b.1913, Springhill.

great-granddaughter of Joseph G. Maddison--the oldest miner of Springhill.

used to go and visit his home. he was 69 years in the mine and he was still working. used to measure out lumps of coal one at a time.

lived in company houses in Queen Street.

her ~~father's~~ grandfather die? ...
can't remember great-grandfather's death date.

her father was a 'hard-working' coal miner.

great-grandfather, grandfather and father were all born in England--
Durham Co.

--her father landed in Canada in 1883; born Durham, England 1883.
five years old when he came to Canada.

--1 1/2 days on the water.

--she has some wonderfully old photographs of her family.

--grandfather came over with her father in 1885.

--the family was very well-dressed.

--Church of England family.

--'On Sunday, we didn't dare pick up a ball. That was God's day and that was it.'

--her father was born 1883. Durham, England.

--I think they used to put posters out--good living in Canada, and all that.'

company put them out of the company houses. family moved to another street.

the people of Springhill seem close.

--her brothers, each week, had to pass their pay into her father for his keeping. they'd line up--and he'd give them pocket money, clothe them and keep them in tobacco. When they became 21 they paid their board. fourteen children--nine boys. all but three went down the mine. all but one worked for the company in some fashion or other.

--book of people dying in Springhill kept by her brother--goes from 1917.

after the strike they came back to a company house.

children lined up in two shifts at dinner. two settings. extremely strict family--very strict at the table.

bringing up nine boys in a little town. none of them got into trouble. he used to sit back and call them his baseball players. he might have been prouder of the boys than with the girls.

[she really loved her father.]

--they never missed a ballgame, her father and her mother--even those in Westville--and they went to all the dances. they'd be out for hours at dances. the older children looked after the smaller ones.

front parlour kept for special visitors. a ceremonial room.

her family had an organ. sideboards. nice furnishings. etc.

'Your house had to be scrubbed through every week.'

--girls allowed to take kitchen chairs out and scrub them. she was nine when she was first allowed to scrub the children. every girl worked.

her mother quilted, made hooked rugs.

died at 49.

she would darn late at night and darn late at night and listen to the radio.

her mother was born in Stellarton. her father was a miner.
her sister had moved to Springhill--she came with her to live.

her father went out west during the depression. worked on a farm out there.
--went on the Harvest Excursions. (could not have been the 1930s.)

lot of her relatives went out west and stayed there.

--Maldison. (double d.)

girls worked outside the home: oldest worked in a store, next oldest worked as a telephone operator, she worked as an usherette in the theatre (called the STRAND theatre).
--sister worked--during the last war--took a commercial course, she works at government work.

her father had a big garden with his brother--they kept pigs, etc., hens.

her husband worked for Weatherbees.

she was married in 1930. he got \$10 a week working for Weatherbees.
they had two children. rent was \$9.50 a month. coal was \$3.90 a ton.
your light bills weren't too much. a man that worked five or six days at the mine on company work--they would draw twenty some dollars.
Store bill would be \$5 a week. They seemed to have everything they needed. had a car, a place up at the lake. it was a tight squeeze, but it wasn't harsh poverty.

--she'd vote the way her parents did. her parents would fight, over whoever got in.

father died 1963.

of the nine brothers ~~one~~ was killed.

her mother, every Saturday night, would first do her shopping at Soley's store, and then go to the show at the movies. after the show she would pick up her parcels.

--two theatres: the Capital and the Strand. called both the theatres the "Nickle-ettes." Children would pawn their pickings off the duff bank in the strike. Every child would pick off coal there. Would get some money for this coal from the stores. Company never complained too much about this. Grown-ups were there too. People used to lay their babies down on the duff banks under blankets.

--strong class distinctions, she says. he thinks the "Rows" are the slums of Springhill. people from the Rows can't get into the Senior Citizens Housing.
--people who live in Senior Citizens Housing never wanted to be near the Rows.

--they were "Hillers"--they were snobby.

'West End,' 'Hillers,' 'Rows'p---three districts?

--association with Company Housing.

--thought the distinction with.

'If a Hiller took out a girl from the Rows, they might get into trouble.'

--élite all lived up in the hill.

they both remembered 'wakes'--that's how it used to be. Now they have funeral homes.

élite drank just as hard, but they were able to hide it.

company was pretty good as a landlord.

she didn't feel any class distinction but she hated school all her life.

talkies came in in 1930--then it was 55c for each person. the theatres were pretty crowded each night.