

[Page 24 - On the S&L Railroad Part Two](#)ISSUE : [Issue 29](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1981/8/1

(Did the people here stand up and fight and say, don't change it?) Then, it was not like it is today. They didn't fight. We tried to keep the train on for 6 months. I thought when it came my turn that I could hold a steady job out of Louisbourg, that that train would never be taken off while I was here. But I was mistaken. Russell Cunningham: Aw, it was rough work. It would have dull times, but we got boom periods, It'd be busy in the summer, slack down, then get busy again in the winter when the Newfoundland opened, then slack down in the spring--that's the way it went. It was always a rush to get the bank coal away, because if you didn't get it away in the summer, there was always the danger it would go on afire, because ;coal heats if it's put in a pile--spontaneous combustion. Coal afire. They had a lot of fires. And in the winter--could be 26-hour shifts, stuck in the snow, split your train in 2 and 3 pieces to get it up some of the hills--she was rough. You used to have to get a pickaxe to get your cars to couple. The snow would be up to the drawbars, and she'd push the snow ahead of her and pack the pinholes, and the pins wouldn't drop. The knuckles would close all right--you'd get them closed--but you couldn't get the pins to drop. Well, you'd go out. You had to take your fireman's shovel and get a shovelful of hot coals from the engine and hold it under and melt the stuff out to get the pins to drop--that was hard. And we worked a good many 26-hour shifts. (Why?) Listen', supposing I got out to Lou? isbourg and it took us 7 hours--go into Victoria and start getting a train, gather? ing it up, in the winter with the snow and everything, have to dig your cars out 2 and 3 at a time sometimes--pick up at O'Neil's and pick up at the Hub and fill out at Caledonia--sometimes it'd be 6 and 7 hours when you'd get in Louisbourg. What are you going to do? You're not going to jump off and go home. (Well,, people do to? day, when they work an 8-hour shift.) Oh yeah, but that was the railroad. You couldn't leave the engine out there and the crew go home--you had no way of get? ting home. And the railroad would plug up with empties. There'd be empties waiting to go back, (So after you've spent 7 hours getting to Louisbourg..) You've got to wa? ter your engine, bunker your engine, per? haps have a bit to eat yourself--of course, you could eat on the train when she was moving. But if you got out there 7 hours, we'll say, you couldn't pull the pin at 8 hours and go. No. So you got back as far as Morien or Caledonia, and you've got or? ders. Take this fella's train--see, he'd have a train made up--take this fella's train, go back to Louisbourg with it. His time was getting long. He'd perhaps have 12 hours in then. You'd only have 8, So they'd get you to take his train back out to Louisbourg, So you get out there. And perhaps you'd get stuck in the snow a few times going out and you'd have trouble--by the time you'd get in with empties and put them somewhere, perhaps 26 hours. Lots of shifts 26 hours. (You wouldn't know how long the shift was going to be when you left home?) No, You filled your lunch can when you went out on the railroad--you nev? er knew what would happen, (And did you like the work?) Ah, it was all right. Yes, I liked it at the time. Specializing in Fried Chicken Chez Emile Drive-In and Laundromat ARICHAT On Beautiful Isle Madame Acadian Campsite 3-Way or Partial Hook-ups Freshwater Lake June - September



Arichat 226-2447 Cape Breton Bed and Breakfast Watch for BED AND BREAKFAST sign or contact Cape Breton Tourist Assn. for a list. Br) Cape Breton's BED AND BREAKFAST program offers a unique and interesting experience in overnight accommodations. Every season those in the program, displaying the sign at left, open their doors to greet visitors with courtesy and warmth, Princess Historic Mine Located in the Town of Sydney Mines, Cape Breton DAILY TOURS 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M. JUNE 15 TO SEPT. 11 NO RESERVATION REQUIRED A Gift Shop and the Caul grounds of Retired miners will be your guides when you experience the exciting adventure tour of a real mine. From history to heritage, the visitor can enjoy a thrilling trip down a shaft to see how mining is carried out today. Every tour of the mine is accompanied by a veteran miner. Visitors, wearing protective clothing, miners hard hat and lamp, descend down a 682 foot shaft to pit bottom. The equipment used in a modern longwall mining operation has been maintained at the coal face. The tour then views operations at pit bottom after which man-rakes are boarded for a trip to the surface. At the head of the tunnel, a narrow gauge train, powered by a mine diesel, waits to take visitors back to the mine site where they will turn in their safety equipment. It's a thrilling and informative adventure tour for the whole family. dron Restaurant are also located on the the Princess Historic Mine.