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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1974/6/1

family they'd after moved to the coal mine • so I came to the coal mine. At Bridge? port. Gone and forgotten long ago. Between Glace Bay and Dominion. I worked four years there and I worked six months up in Dominion. The mine was down then, she was only what they called the narrow works, only worked in the winter, see? And the rest of the mine it'd be down. Well, the first job I did was tend the rapper. Instead of using wires and signal wires like they use today in the mine, used to use a thing with a hammer. You pull on this and there was a plate and this thing would go down on the plate and give the raps. So many raps for a smash or whatever was on. Say there was a smash on, boxes off of the road • then if the mine knocked off they'd give you 6 raps from the pit bottom, bottom of the shaft • and you'd give 6 raps to the next fellow, and he'd give it • messages. There was no telephone then. And then I went driving after that. That's a horse and boxes about as long as from here to the 'J'??*.>Ai??'Jrt,'jl,'" Right; Handpick Mining tools on display at the Miners' Museum; Left; Holing or undercutting by hand, wood sprags fo"?" support; Below; sketch of breast aug'er. 3?:2fe 'wall. Then I left there and went to Dominion, worked up there • 6 months or 8 months • and I left there and I come down to Caledonia Mine. And that's where I finished up at. A long time. Around 50 years, I guess. And that's the first mine there was ever a telephone put in. I was tending what they call the landing, putting on the full boxes and taking off the empty ones, off of the main haulage, see? And when that was done I shipped them the east side of Caledonia, that was going under the ocean • and there was a telephone on that landing. They didn't think a telephone would work un? derground, you know. But it did. Most of the time, you know, I worked at the coal face, mining coal. We done handpick work and we done machine work. You just mine the coal with the handpick and load it with the pan shovel. You had to dig her down. You have her up pretty near as high as them curtains there. You'd lay on your side, like this, put a little soft coal, minings, under your shoulder--and you'd get in so far. Course when you'd get it opening out you'd be in on your knees. Then you'd get in so far you'd have to get down on your side, see? You're underneath the wall of coal. Picking away, picking away. You didn't brace that wall. Not with the handpicks. But with the machine they did. Put what they call a sprag. You'd go in round about five feet I guess, just as far as you could reach in. Then you'd back out, bore and shoot • blow it all up. That was in rooms. In pillars you had to sprag your coal. If you are mining out what they call pillar work, well there's a room out on both sides of you. This is a pillar. You'd have to sprag that when you'd be in under that. In case there'd be any loose coal on the face would fall. Sprag was made of wood. You mined on a bench you know • left a bench of coal about so high. You mined on that. You'd dig a hole in that and put your sprag in and a wedge in over it, see? You had a handpick and a pan shovel and an auger for boring your hole for shooting it • had a little thing called a breast auger. You put that up to make a little hole first. Then you'd take a bar they called the stand bar • you'd drive that in the hole. Then you had a thread bar • and you put your augers onto that. Qien you turn it. You'd bore it and then you'd fill it up



with powder, shoot it. Shoot it your? self. You didn't have to call a shotfire • not then, when they had the handpick like that. Shooting your own coal, yeah. You had all loose powder then, see? and you had a stick about that long and it had like a piece of pipe on it • call that a caster • powder was in a can. You take it up on your arm like that and pour the powder in there. Put it in, you know, shoot it in • put it in with your stemmer they called it, piece of copper on the end of it • you'd push it back and then you'd stem it up • then D • -oi:rr*rcY- k' j' Cape Breton's Magazine/7