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Edith Pelley, William Davis's Daughter An Interview, with Photographs, by Norman MacKinnon INTRODUCTION: June 11th is Davis Day/Miners Memorial Day. Besides bringing to mind all miners who have died in the mines, Davis Day recalls the death of William Davis, shot during the 1925 coal miners' strike • the incident that signalled the attack on the powerhouse at New Waterford and, by nightfall, the burning of the first of several coal company properties. Recently, Norman MacKinnon visited with Edith Davis Pelley, William Davis's youngest daughter. What follows is taken from their conversations. Edith Pelley. Guysborough: I had a fairly good life in New Waterford. I liked the place. But I don't think I could go back there to live now. Not since my father and mother's gone, and most of my brothers. I only have my sisters and one brother down there now. And one brother out in Edmonton, Alberta. So I don't think I could live down there now. It's all right to go for a visit, and come home the same day. I left when I was 17. (What was your home like?) It was a company house. But it was a big house. We had one part of it. And then another family lived in the other part. But it was a nice home. We had all our own privacy and everything, our own yard. I had 7 brothers and 5 sisters. There's 12 of us. We had a good life. My mother had it hard at times. But we always managed to get along. We never did any fighting or anything among the family. We all got along good.... My father was good to us and my mother was good to us. So we had a happy life. (How old were you in 1925?) Six, when my father was killed. I was only 6 years old. But I remember everything. He was born in England. He met my mother down in Cape Breton, but she was born in Ireland. She came to Cape Breton to live, with her father and mother. Then my father moved to Springhill. And my mother met him at the lodge meeting, and she started to go out with him then. She was 19 when she got married. And my father was 21. So they were both very young. (Tell me a little bit more about your mom.) Well, she used to do homemade cooking and sell it. And she sold enough to buy a horse and wagon and all the harness, out of the homemade cooking. But she was a good cook. I don't know what grade she went to, but it wasn't very high. She only had one sister and two brothers. (What would be your earliest memory of your father?) When he used to take me down to the hospital! And coming home, we were looking in the shop window. And there were apples in the window. And I wanted him to buy me an apple. And he said, "Those are not apples, those are potatoes. We've got lots of them home." He had no money to buy the apple. I had a balloon up my nose. I used to always sit between his legs when he was eating. And he'd say to me, "Oh, my, your nose smells terrible." So they took me down to the doctor. And they found this balloon up in the nose, all rotted. And I used to have to go down to the hospital every morning. So, when he was on day-shift, he'd take me down. And when he was on nightshift. Mum would take me down. I was only about 4. (You were quite young when your father died. Do you remember him talking about the problems that the miners were having?) Oh, yes. He used to say about they weren't getting enough wages. And they had to work awful hard. That's why they were out on strike



(in 1925) was for higher wages. PIPER'S TRAILER COURT Featuring: Fully Licensed Dining Room Laundromat Mini-Mart Ocean-Side Campsites Swimming Pool 929-2233 929-2067 Indian Brook on the Cabot Trail (Halfway between Baddeck and Ingonish) From either direction on the Cabot Trail, plan for comfort and welcome Piper's Old Manse GUEST HOUSE with Bed and Breakfast , OPEN YEAR ROUND >