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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/12/1

When I got up, there were thousands of people around. Big ropes around • they had everything all fenced off. And I was as shy as the devil then. I saw that crowd of people • and there was a small building there and I went over in back of that building and I laid down there and blacked out. It was in the summertime. Aw, hot morning. I was shy and all those people • my clothes were all wet and everything. I don't know if I fell asleep or I was gassed • but I wasn't too good for about three months after. Anyhow, somebody found me and took me home. I don't know who took me home. I thought there'd be nobody killed, being as I made it. But when they took my father home at 2 o'clock in the morning, my mother woke me up. Told me that my father was dead. I went to the funeral. All horse and wagon. Some were buried in New Victoria, some were buried down at the old graveyard, way down at the shore. Half of it is all gone now, over the bank, washed away. My father is gone, long ago. (After the explosion, did people blame your father?) No, no, no. The men that were in the mines at that time, they knew, but the younger generation now, they don't. Even here in Waterford, I don't know how well it's remembered. See, there were some men, they were always company men. Everything that went on, anything around the U.M.W. meeting • the manager had it in the morning. Now, there was one overman, he was on No. 6 landing • and there were 6 drivers on that landing. And there were only enough empties on that landing for 5 men. Well, the first driver in in the morning was the first driver out in the evening.... Well, of 6 drivers there were four of them gone in. There were only enough empties for one driver and there were two drivers there • and they were arguing over who should have the boxes. The overman's son was in one of them. The overman came in, "What's the argument about?" One fellow said, "It's my turn to go with the boxes." But the overman said to his boy, "You go." Well, his son was in there and killed in the explosion • the other fellow got away. But that overman swore on the stand • I wasn't there but I heard the men talking about it afterward • he swore he told my father the day before the explosion that there was gas there. My father was off sick for 3 months. That was his first day back. So how could he tell him the day before that there was gas, when he was not there? (But the company was blamed for the explosion?) Oh, yeah. It was their fault. They never had brattices (heavy cloth partitions to control ventilation), they never had nothing. The war was on and they wanted coal wherever they could get it. The air course should be clear like the floor here. But the roof of it would fall and it'd be high in places. Well, the air had to come down and go up over these 'falls and come back down and go up over the next one. They weren't looking after it. But after the explosion they had to clear out that air course. (Did you go back in the mines?) No, mother wouldn't allow me to go back. I got a job on the surface after that. And I worked there 52 years. I'm 75 now. I was born January the 23rd, 1903. Con Hogan: Before the explosion, they weren't worried that something might happen. They were too sure of themselves, see? They thought anything was going to happen, they'd know before the time, before it'd come. They were too sure of themselves. They'd go into a place in the pit



and maybe that place wasn't secured • they'd just go right in, didn't matter if the men got killed or not. It wasn't the company • it was the fellows was running it, the officials. As long as they got the pound of coal that's all they gave a damn about. (But these were people's lives.) Yes, I know. Still, it's a fact. (The day of the explosion.) We went down and started working the same as we always ' did. All of a sudden everything got right quiet and right hot. I was on 7 west. The explosion was on 6 west and 7 west. We heard the bang, just like a big bump. And she let go with a bang. Well, she fired everything as far as she could fire. I was fired right through the trap door, the trap door on the level. I was trapping that door. I didn't know any more till they got me to the surface. I was still in a daze. My legs were broken. My head was broken. I've got a plate in there. I had both eyelids cut right off, my whole face just hanging right down. So they put me in the hospital. I was drove through a big Cape Breton's Magazine/5