

[Page 12 - Lew Allan Davis & the Railroad / Jimmy Hines: A View from the Open Hearth](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 27](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1980/12/1

the man that was driving it, But that's the way. It had run people over, Man would be working on a track and this engine would come by and hit him. (Considering the noise, aren't you surprised that people would get hit by trains?) Yes. But that happens yet. And in the wintertime, there'd be a lot of snow around the plant--and at that early time, no equipment to handle it. But finally they got a sweeper--and that connects on to the engine, run by steam. (Before that?) Well, we just plowed through it the best way you can. I've seen us out there nights and nights, couldn't make a move with snow. The steel plant would have to slow up. And they'd buck the snow, buck the snow, one engine after another, try to get where they were going--and finally they'd get there. Hard work. We could shovel if we wanted--everybody did a little that time to keep warm. You could have hot steel on and be stopped by the snow--and I've seen a ladle of steel freeze over, get hard--a solid chunk. They'd have to burn that out in sections with acetylene, turn it out of the ladle and put it in the furnace again. Sit on the train so long it would cool right down, But you know--I liked it. I got used to it and I liked it. I was there 49 years on the one job. Money wasn't the thing at all. I started to work there for 14 cents an hour--general yard, labourer. But when I went brakeman, I got a cent more. You had to work 7 days to make 8 dollars a week. Very little money. I was pensioned off in '58, and the only time I ever put money in to the bank was after I quit work. Jimmy Mines: A View from the Open Hearth Jim Hines: I started in the steel plant in 1922. I was 15 years of age--just a week before school opened. I left school in the eighth grade and I never went back. My father was in the plant before me--he ran a cold saw. In those days, they rolled a rail and put it out on a cooling bed. They'd be different lengths, and they would have to be cut cold to a certain length. He was operating this great big circular saw. There were no teeth in it-- just little gouges about the size of the tip of your finger, into a big blade. And this would be going like the hobs of hell. He'd set the rail the proper length, and then he'd come down with this saw. That was his job till he finished up. I started in the open hearth office, keeping records of other fellows' working. And I said to myself. To hell with that, let them keep records of what I do. And I went into the mill. And in those days everything was by hand-- that is, into the furnace, the open hearth. I went in there as third helper. There was a melter and a second helper--three of us at the open hearth. When that furnace was tapped and we'd make the bottom, the crew from another furnace--the second and third helper--would come down and help us make up the bottom. Otherwise, there was just three of a crew. The open hearth furnace starts off empty after tapping out. We'd prepare that furnace to be charged up again. We'd have to fill it in to the slag line. And it would be hot, you know. You had just tapped out a heat, and you have to keep heat there sufficient to melt down the steel. And in those days it was heated by the old gas producers, operated by men shovelling coal out of a great big hopper into a fire down below, burning coal in a silo, like. The gas off that would come down through a 11ft diameter, \* 1. - • ?w\_~ The



Alternate 1 Energy Shop I ' 500 ESPLANADE, SYDNEY \* 539-0238 • SEE THE  
COMPLETE LINE OF FISHE "J." R STOVES & OTHER ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES. •  
DROP BY OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION. 1 F • ?? A BETTER FUTURE 1 (12) 1  
BRIAND'S CAB VISIT Fortress Louisbourg Graham Bell Museum r\*?nA 1I • A??AM  
Miners' Museum XJSM iMrCUnl Gaelic College TOURS aBOT TRAIL  
664-6161 664-61'2