

Page 26 - Working on the Sydney Coal Piers ISSUE : <u>Issue 44</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/1/1

pers loving their work, the trimmers lov? ing their work.) They did, to a certain ex? tent. They were dedicated. Not that they loved the job. But when there was a job to be done, they tried to do it the best they could. It wasn't a matter of them loving the job or anything. It was kind of, they wanted to give a fair day's work for a day's pay. (And was it a fair day's pay?) Well, it wasn't. We lived onto it, but it wasn't. (I understand it was very low.) Oh, it was. How would you like to go to the office on Saturday, get your pay, look at the envel- ope--6 shifts, 25c. We bunkered the Kyle or the Caribou or something that week. We went in the 6 shifts. We were tonnage at that time. And that was your share of the tonnage. I had the envelope for years, till it crumbled away. Six shifts: 25c. I remember one Christmas pay we did pretty good--\$9.95. And yet, we had 2 or 3 kids to buy stuff for. See, we worked up until November. Sometime in November the Pier closed. The river (St. Lawrence) was closed, see, and once the river closed, there was practically nothing down here. You went home, then you sat until maybe next May. That depended too on the weather and the drift ice. I've seen us having to go to Louisbourg the 24th of May on ac? count of ice here, to load a ship. So, you never made a fortune there, but nobody starved. I had in a drawer my paysheets for about the second last year I worked; I had the whole darn lot right through, prac? tically, for the year. It seems to me I burned them. A GREAT COMBINATION ski + tennis The Winning Technology -PLUS-SKI BINDINGS -PLUS- 189 Townsend St., Sydney, N.S. -539-7165 (26) Abbie Neville, Whitney Pier, Pier Superin- tendent (Retired): I was born on Dominion Street, right here. Well, that's all we ever saw, was the Pier. Go to school, and go home, and go down to the shore. It was only one minute, and you were at the Pier, see. Oh, it was busy, 'cause we'd always see ships coming in for bunker. You'd see Spanish trawlers coming in, French trawl? ers. All summer long, there seemed to be something going on. I guess we lived in a world of our own then. Because we met so many strangers, from different parts of the world. I thought it was exciting, you know. I believe it was an education itself. Because later on in years, I know when the war started in Europe, I figured I knew every country in Europe, just from living around the Pier and meeting the foreign sailors. Dutch, Norwegian. It seemed to pinpoint you--it made geography very easy for you--you were so interested into it. I used to go down to the Pier every day. My father worked down there. He was fore- CAPE BSSTOI iillAflwlliw o%mn?? a collection of Cape Breton photographs - i86o~ig'' ' • ' by OwenTitzgerald