

[Page 30 - Working on the Sydney Coal Piers](#)ISSUE : [Issue 44](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/1/1

ance), no nothing. Even this old age pen? sion business--this was kind of a dis? grace, that you'd have to accept the old age pension. (Didn't they make a living off their farms?) Oh, they weren't farms; they were 10 or 12 acres, you know. They'd probably cultivate 5 or 6 acres and that would be it. He'd have a horse, enough hay for the cows. It wasn't much of a farm, you know, in a sense. (This business of shipping coal, wouldn't that interfere with your farm?) Oh no, no, no, no--not at all. Because you'd come home from your day's work there, your night's work there, and whatever you had to do in the field, you did it. I'd work the farm and I'd work at the Coal Piers. Say, haymaking time. Say you're on the midnight shift. You come home 9 o'clock (in the morning) or something like that. You'd have a machine to repair and hay to make, and one thing and another. FLOWER SHOP (1983) LTD. Richardson Ave. 562-5557 Sydney, N. S. GOOD LUCK TO THE CANADA GAMES ATHLETES! BELLE ISLE LINCOLN MERCURY -SENIOR SERVICE- Any FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE Make Car Care Plan for Senior Citizens FREE Loaner Car on Overnight Repairs FREE Pick Up and Delivery of Your Car Tow to Our Service Department 20% Off on Ford Parts 20% Off on Repairs Done Here Life Insurance on Car Loans I. D. Card I'd work right up, perhaps 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. I'd lay on the couch for an hour, and get up and go to work. And next day the same thing over again. You know, the funny part about it is that you'd go back to work the next day, probab? ly a terrible hot day in the summertime. And the fellow next to you'd be saying, "My God, she was terrible hot today. I couldn't sleep." I'd be ashamed to tell him that I never went to bed! But you know, I did that for years and never thought any? thing about it. (When would you be getting your sleep, then?) Well, I'll just tell you my big ad? vantage. I could throw myself down on the ground or the floor or anything and be a- sleep in two minutes. And if I slept 24 hours, I think I'd wake up tired. It depended on the coal. You might get a little nap in between. I always figured that if I got 5 minutes' sleep when the sun's coming up in the morning, I was good for the day! But, you know, I was healthy and everything, and I appreciated the fel? lows that weren't healthy and weren't strong, that you just couldn't do it. (At the Piers, would you get some breaks?) Oh yeah, yeah. We'd just sleep on the benches, you know. They wouldn't be very comfortable. Just like sleeping on the floor. But the sad part about that is that sometimes you got terri? ble tired, and you might fig? ure, "Now, I'll get an hour's sleep tonight." That's the very night there would be an empty boat there and you won't get anything at all. You'd have to work all night. You worked 8 hours, you know. BELLE ISLE LINCOLN MERCURY SALES LTD. 195 Prince St, Sydney "At the Tracks" 539-9292 (So you would make hay....) Or plow, or haul manure, or whatever was required on the farm. (And then over there at the Coal Pier....) Years ago, we were shovelling constantly in those cars. They used to get that banked coal. They'd bank it in the wintertime and ship it in the summertime. And that would be sticking in the car just like chewing gum. You'd have to bar it out, and beat it out. It wasn't the easiest way to make a living but, you know, things were tough on Cape Breton. I was glad to get a job, sure. Because



previous to that I was here on the farm, and we used to grow some veg? etables and I'd haul them to Sydney, and you'd go around and knock on the doors, you know, peddling from door to door. It was discouraging business. So when you got steady employment without