

Page 31 - Working on the Sydney Coal Piers ISSUE : <u>Issue 44</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/1/1

asking everybody every 5 minutes to buy something from you, it was guite an im? provement. Gordon Kehoe, Louisbourg, Shipper: They mined the coal in the winter, and they banked it. And then they lift that in the summertime, and ship it. Well, that would be hot as anything, and hard to get out of cars. You'd have to get down in the car and shov? el it out. (The bottom doors are open-- won't the coal fall through?) No, not that bank slack, no. It was packed that tight. It was like cement, pretty near, something like cement. Once they put it in the cars there, and it stood for just a little while--you open up the bottoms and let that go, there wouldn't be not a thing come out of it at all. You'd have to get bars, and bore a hole down through, from the top of the car down. And fellows down at the side of the car with mauls, pound? ing on the side of the car. Trying to get a hole through it. And when you got a hole through it, you got down in that car and you shovelled it out. It was all solid. But once you got a hole and got a start on it, you could get it shovelled out then. David Lewis: There was other coal, it was very fine, it would be like flour, and you knew you'd have to shovel it all out. Get? ting in a car--you'd have to get down and you'd straddle the car--like a strongback in it, you know--you straddle the car here. And if the coal was fine, what I used to do--I'd shut my eyes when I got in, and I wouldn't open them till I got out. Because, you know, it was hard on the eyes, that fine coal. You know, a gale of wind coming up. (Coming up from the bottom? Do you mean straddle the part that's open?) Oh yeah, yeah. There was a fellow on that end of (the car), and there was a fellow on this end of it. And there was what we called a strongback went through the middle. You'd brace yourself between--one foot here and one foot there. You'd work like this -- straddle like that -- and you'd be moiling the coal down with the shovel, between your legs. Gordon Kehoe: Anything could happen. You could get caught any way. You could slip off a car. One fellow got his two legs ta? ken off there. He only lived a few days af? ter, that was it. Slipped, and went under a car. I got bad smashed up myself. I don't remem? ber much about it. But I was coming down off the--what you call a cap-piece--where you stand, you know. I was cleaning out cars then. I was coming down, and I put my foot--they tell me--on the lever of a door they used to have for letting the coal out, I put my foot on the lever. The door was GLACE BAY BUILDING SUPPLIES LIMITED • ,. people you should know 2 Argyle St., Glace Bay 849-6666 "Everything for the Builder" Cape Breton Mental Health Centre Main Location: 1st Floor, Cape Breton Hospital,' Sydney River Satellite Clinics Serve These Areas: North Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, Harbour, Ingonish, Cheticamp, Baddeck, Neil's St. Peter's Services: Psychotherapy, Individual Counselling, Marriage & Family Counselling, Group Therapy, Consultation to Agencies, Schools, etc., Drug Therapy, Forensic Assessment, Psychological Testing, Parenting, Children's Services Referrals accepted from all sources. You can even refer yourself. Please Call 562-3202 or 562-3110 or 562-3333 Stores To Serve You CAPE BRETON SHOPPING PLAZA SYDNEY RIVER Um' Featuring AWfl? OCPARTMf NT tTONCt The Crossroads of Cape Breton' Sobeys & Shopper's Drug Mart ?'9hways 4 and s en Daily il 10 p.m. (31)