

[Page 42 - Working on the Sydney Coal Piers](#)ISSUE : [Issue 44](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/1/1

moving again, and it's kept on moving. Now they're on the world market. The English don't buy any more coal. But they're in a German market, Brazilian market, Sweden. I think right up every year, they're hitting a million ton of coal since 1976, right up to the present day; they're hitting a million ton of coal a year. (Would that be considered a lot?) No, it's not a lot. But it came from nowhere, you know, it came from nothing. I guess in the future they're talking about shipping 3 or 4 million ton of coal. So they're improving all their facilities down here now--they're making a new pier, a new run-around for quicker loading, they're making deeper water. All we have is around 30 feet depth. And a lot of these ships coming in could load to 36 feet. You're losing 6 feet-- that's over 6000 ton of coal every cargo. So that's why they're going to change things for the future. They'll dredge, so the ship can load deeper. There's even talks of making a new pier. Going further out. See, I retired in June (1982). But when I left--I like looking down, but I don't look down to get deeply involved in it. I just like looking down, you know. So I still look over the hill every day, to see what's going on • (That's a long period that you just ran through. You say there was one year they didn't ship a pound of coal?) That was 1973. Well, in 1964 they laid off all the shippers and trimmers, all but about 15. The height when I was there, we had about 215. And she went right down to 15. That's all you had. Now she's back to--she's in the hundred down there now--shippers and trimmers. (Do they still do it by hand today?) No. The cars are all new cars, they unload themselves. And the trimmer--there's no such a thing. One time, trimming a boat, you'd have about 20 men go aboard. Now there's only two. They use a spout to put it in all the corners. No shovelling. I don't think there would be too many shovels down there today. It's a different type of ship. The ships are what you call bulk carriers, and they're wide open. The hatches are half the size of the ship--you just shoot the coal in now. Everything's changed. It made a hard job into a good job. If the old trimmers and shippers could come back and look now, they'd never die, never. 'ft' '*' %'?? Jimmy Gallivan: There was no wash house then. And no bathtubs. You'd come home black from head to foot. Get in the wash- tub or something, try and scrub yourself, get the coal dust off. And if you were out in the rain, your clothes were all soaking, and black. You'd hang them around the kitchen stove, and there'd be pools of water running, taking the coal dust--trying to get them dry for the next shift. No hot water--only what you'd heat on the stove, a kettle. There was no such a thing as hot water. Yeah. Oh, my God. (Did this mean heavy work for your wife?) Heavy work for my mother. The wash house was built the week I got married! I was married in 1937, in October. The wash house, I think, was completed that week. My wife didn't know what it was. But my mother did. My uncle boarded with us. He was a trimmer, too. My father and my uncle and me. My mother did it all.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45 The Cape Breton Tourist Association Offers 100,000 Welcomes to All Visitors to Our Island You will find the hospitality truly outstanding



while you visit with us. And we hope you will remember us kindly when you return to your homes IF YOU THINK THE WINTER IS GREAT - mtmiim COME SEE US NEXT SUMMER ! Don Blackwood, Executive Director, Cape Breton Tourist Association, 20 Keltic Drive, Sydney River, Nova Scotia BIS 1P5 WRITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR PHONE 539-9' Photo by Warren Gordon from his calendar Cape Breton Island 1987 i*#r>