

[Page 4 - Mine Explosion in New Waterford, 1917](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 21](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/12/1

fellows they found on 7 landing had their heads off and their arms off and all tangled, all torn to pieces. The explosion must have happened on 7. not on 6. But they said my father set off the explosion. Now my father worked on 6 landing, those fellows that were all torn up were on 7 landing. I was on 8 landing, I was down further. When the explosion happened I had the horse standing with his head facing out, I was back. The shafts were made with a bow at the back • and I had a hold of the back of the shafts up over my shoulder, hooking the straps on the back on his hips, hooking the straps there • and when I get them hooked I come to the front and I lift the shafts up and I hook on the chains. Well, when I had the shafts up over my shoulder there was a breeze of wind came out off the level • oh, it was carrying everything. Lumps of coal were going with it and dust, you couldn't see anything. And pieces of wood flying. It knocked me and the horse down. But I never thought it was an explosion. I could hear like a long distance off, I heard like a shot going off and everything shook, you know? But I never thought an explosion. I was only a kid. I got up out of there. I got the harness back on the horse and got the shafts on him. By this time the wind had all died down. And I hooked on 10 empty boxes and Cape Breton's MagazineA went in where the loaders were, I left the 10 empties there and there were 10 boxes of coal there standing. I hooked on them and went back out again • about a mile, I guess. When I got back out the overman was there. He said, "Listen, boy, there's an explosion. How about going back in after those loaders?" There were four. So I took one box in and I got the loaders, told them there was an explosion. They got in the box with me and we started back. Got out the landing. Well, they were all excited. They jumped out of the box and took off. I took the shafts off of the horse. Started to walk. I didn't go too far when I got in the dark. I was • 3 in the dark from No. 7 up to No. 2 • the stables were on 2. (You walked all that in the dark?) Of course I had a hold of the horse's tail • he'd hold you up. So, got up to the stables at 2. The rakes were there then, with the draegermen on. The draegermen had canaries in cages and had their masks on • and they wouldn't go down where I came up through, through the smoke. It was okay from 8 up to No. 4 landing • each one of those landings was 800 feet apart • when I got to 4 the smoke was coming out of 4, going up. So I had to walk from No. 4 to 2 in that smoke. Oh, my throat was that dry it was cracking. I got on the rakes at 2. Well, I was out in no time.