When my mother Maria Drake was a girl she told me she would never forget hearing the continuous whistle from Number One mine being blown. That meant there had been an accident. It was just about supper time. She and the rest of the family ran out into Needham Street, where they saw a tragic sight. Men, women, and children, some of the women pregnant, streaming down toward the mine. It registered on her mind so many of the women had starched white aprons on. In those days that meant dressing up for dinner. Women in most cases tugging little children with tears rolling down their faces. They sensed something dreadful had happened.

That was in 1877, the year of the big explosion when 150 men lost their lives. Some met a lingering death as shovels were later found with chalk recordings of the passage of time.

My great Uncle Johnathon Blundell was one of the miners. His body was never found. He left a young wife and five children. Two weeks later one of the little girls fell into a well and was drowned. Her name was Gertrude.

My great-aunt Mary Anne, formerly Malpass, was a woman of great spirit. She later married Richard Rowe, who was a butcher. They had three children who later helped their mother manage the M.A. Rowe store, along with their elder Blundell brothers and sisters which became a thriving business. It still stands as the Red & White Store on the corner of Haliburton & Needham Streets. (Signed) Rhoda M. Beck.

Mrs. Beck: Is it ready now?

MB: Yes.

Mrs. Beck (reading): The Southfield Cave-in. --The old Southfield was being dismantled. Samuel Robbins approached James Dunsmuir and said a huge pillar of coal was under the F&N railway for a certain seam, the props should be left in. Mr. Dunsmuir refused and so Mr. Robbins told the men who were on the job, among them my father, Edward Devlin, to take the props out.

My father said every time they heard that train rumble over their heads they would scurry for a narrow passage, expecting every minute to have tracks, trains, and passengers come through on their defenseless heads.

It happened. Dad was not on that shift. The cave in was about 10 feet deep and 50 or 60 yards wide. The shaken miners fled for their lives, narrowly being saved from being buried under the huge seam of coal which fell about 12 feet.

The frightened passengers went to one side of the cave-in where they detrained and waited until a train came up from Victoria, where they
walked on planks over the huge cavity which was eventually filled with gravel.

Mr. Dunsmuir and Samuel Robbins had always been at loggerheads and that cave in didn't help matters. (Signed) Rhoda N. Beck.

Mrs. Beck: Now the Telephone?

MB: Yes, please.

Mrs. Beck: First Telephone. -- Nanaimo has the distinction of having had the first \text{**Bell**} telephone in British Columbia. The two-way talking device was also the first to be manufactured in the province. It was made by William H. Wall, (my great uncle), an employee of Wellington Collieries, on instructions from Chief engineer F.D. Little in 1877.

Mr. Wall, known as an \text{**A-1**} mechanic with the aid of Abe Hamilton, obtained the makings of a telephone from the \text{**Science American**}. Thus he constructed a phone which the mouth piece also \text{**was**} used as the ear piece.

Copper was obtained from the banding on powder kegs shipped from England. Magnets were made from iron strips polarized from a large magnet, and the diaphragm (?) constructed from an old tintype picture.

The design had been patented and Robert Dunsmuir obtained two more phones from San Francisco, California, which he installed between Wellington and Departure Bay, a distance of two and a half miles, where Mr. Dunsmuir and family lived, and many a two-way talk was recorded.

A matter of 10 years later the Nanaimo exchange listed eight subscribers. It was housed in George Cavalsky's store.

Mr. Wall was married to Naomi Malpass whose parents, John and Lavina Malpass were passengers on the Princess Royal which landed in B.C. in November, 1854, and were my great grandparents. (Signed) Rhoda M. Beck.

MB: Those two telephones that Mr. Dunsmuir sent to San Francisco for, were they the same kind that had been made here? Or were they a \text{**Bell**} telephone?

Mrs. Beck: They were \text{**Bell**} telephones, because Alexander Graham Bell got the patent before Uncle Willie, and (\text{**A-1**}) got around to getting it. So it would be \text{**Bell**} telephone. Yes. I've heard them say that had they been on the ball, you know, they could have had that patented first.

MB: Don't they have it in the Bastion?

Mrs. Beck: Yes, I think so.

MB: You have another one?

Mrs. Beck: Yes, the Jack Mine. Shall I do it now?

MB: Very good!
The Jack Mine. -- The Jack Mine, named for owner Mr. Jack, was not much bigger than a well. The first load of coal sent to Vancouver had a tragic mishap. The scow capsized. Later on the mine was sold to Mr. Jack Grant, who sold it to Mr. H Johnnie John, who after a time sold it to a Mr. Lantz of Seattle, where the name of Lantzville evolved. He sold it to the Canadian Collieries. In due course it also closed down. Mr. Irus, my informant, says there is an abundance of coal there yet. Jack Hinksman, a descendant of the Jacks, is a patient in extended care in Nanaimo Hospital. (Signed) Rhoda M. Beck.

Mrs. Beck: He's in his '90's. -- Now, here's a bit about my Dad. (reads) Brechin Mine -- My father, Edward Devlin, was a fire boss at Brechin Mine. In 1908 he passed the shot lighter, who didn't say he had placed a shot, and let him walk into it. He lost the sight of one eye, and for a time it was touch and go that he might be blinded in both. He received no compensation as one of the bosses told him not to raise a fuss or he might not get his job when he was fit to go back.

To the family it was a great hardship as my mother had a new two-week-old baby when the accident occurred. No money coming in, and our parents and five children to care for. Fortunately my parents had a good credit rating and in due time all debts were paid. So much for the "good old days". My Uncle Harry Devlin was mine inspector for many years. He worked in the coal mines in Workington, Cumberland, England, before coming to Nanaimo. (Signed) Rhoda M. Beck.

MB: Is there a Mary Devlin too?

Mrs. B: No, not that I know of. (Note: Comes out later who she is.)

MB: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mrs. B: I had two brothers and two sisters. I was the middle one. My oldest sister is in Grand Prairie, she's 85. And my brother next to her, he passed away two years ago. First one in the family. Then, I'll be 83 in August. My brother Sam was 12 in 1911 when he joined the army in the 1st World War, is now with his wife, Mary Devlin -- but she's not --

MB: Oh, that's the one.

Mrs. Beck: Yes, but she's not -- that's Sam's wife. She was Mary Sharp. And they live in the Salvation Army Lodge in Vancouver. And he is 78. And he was 17 when he joined up in the 1st World War. No, Sam is 80.

MB: Did he go into the mining too?

Mrs. B: No. He never did. During that 1911 strike when my two brothers and my two sisters, well there was nothing coming in. My dad
was on strike. We bought a store on Nicol Street. A family store, you know, general store. And the two boys worked there till Sam joined the army, at 16, and when he came out he went to work for Woodwards in Vancouver. So my brothers never were in the coal mines.

MB: What about when the strike came on, and you had a house down at Departure Bay?

Mrs. B: No, we went in an leaky old tent! No, we didn't have a house at Departure Bay! No, we had a leaky tent, and my mother, I think she got the pioneer spirit from her people that came out here in 1854, and she was great on this camping, sort of thing. And the neighbours thought we were crazy to leave a comfortable home, and go and live in a tent. But we did it every summer, down at Departure Bay, for years and years. When there were very few people down there at that time. Not like it is now.

MB: No, I can hardly imagine it. There would be the Brechin mine, I suppose.

Mrs. Beck: Yes. Dad used to walk over to Brechin mine, yes.

MB: And the Dunsmuir home?

Mrs. B: Well that was Departure Bay. It was a great big house just as you turn 9 to go up to Rock City. They've taken part of it down, it's a smaller place now, it used to be a beautiful great big white home, and that's where the Dunsmuiirs lived. In the early years.

MB: Were they there when you were tenting there?

Mrs. B: No, I never knew them. My mother did. Because Grandmother and Grandfather Drake and the Dunsmuir, were quite friendly. And they used to hire a carriage at different times, and take their families, go down for dinner, and Dunsmuir, until they got too many kids, and load the carriage, and then they stopped. Then they stopped that Sunday night business! (laughter).

MB: And what did they used to do, play cards, and things like that?

Mrs. B: Oh no, just talk, mostly. I don't think I ever saw my grandmother playing cards. But my Grandfather Drake was a musician. He was self-taught. He had the Drake family band. The whole family played instruments, and Dad, of course he was the son-in-law, but he played the cornet. And there were about 15 or so, and they used to go down to the Indian Christmas concerts, and Haliburton Street, and play at smokers. They really had quite a name. And it was called the Drake Family Band.

MB: Well I've heard about the Silver cornet band.

Mrs. B: Well my grandfather was one of the first three to join that silver cornet band. was it a hundred and three years ago? Yes. And Mark Bate, he was the mayor. And Mr. Hosie, he became Professor Hosie, he played the cornet. The some of them had a little orchestra, they used to play for dances.
And they were the first three to join that silver cornet band.

MB: And did you ever see any members of the Dunsmuir family?

Mrs. B: No. No, they were gone before that.

MB: And what happened that night, the night of the -- I understood the riots took place only at Extension and Ladysmith.

Mrs. B: O well, I don't know just what happened, we weren't there, but they had this confrontation down there on Nicol Street, that day. And they said that Devlin's steps were just covered with -- the verandah, and people had a birds eye view right down Watkins Street. And I don't know if anyone was hurt, but there was a lot of yelling and that sort of thing going on. This is just what we were told, because we were at Departure Bay.

Dad knew trouble was coming, and he told my mother, We've got to get the kids out of here. And our boys were highly disgruntled about that when they heard about it. (laughter).

MB: What school did you go to?

Mrs. B: I went to the South Ward, started at Southward, when I was six. I went to the Middle Ward, where your Sunset Square is now, and I went to well, they call it Quennell School now, Central School.

MB: They had at that time a convent here, didn't they?

Mrs. B: Yes. That was on Wallace Street. My mother started school in the convent, when she was a girl. Before she went to public school.

MB: I may be wrong here, so correct me if I am. Mr. I was told that Mr. Von Albeslaben started the Haregood mine, he was from Seattle --

Mrs. B: Allen von Albeslaben, yes.

MB: What happened to him, eventually? how long

Mrs. B: Well you see he was German, and I'm not just too sure he was here before the first world war, but they made themselves pretty scarce once we went to war with Germany. --And what was that other fellow's name? He was a very debonair, he was a big wheel in the war, and he'd been in Nanaimo, people wouldn't believe -- I can't remember his name now. Very sleek, sort of a Hollywood-type, glistening black hair. Can't remember his name. And when you say this, people in Nanaimo wouldn't believe it, but he did. He was in Nanaimo one time.

MB: What would he be connected with then? In your memory? (Pause)

In With the war?

Mrs. B: I think he was in the logging camps. And Von Albeslaben, he was in real estate.

MB: I think Von Albeslaven was deported or something. And you connect this other man with Von A.?
Mrs. B: Well simply because he was a German, and sort of high up in the German hierarchy. And I can't remember his name. --Because he's so well known! You see, I'm going on 83, and my memory --

Mrs. B: (a few inconsequential remarks.)

Mrs. B: You know, my husband, I always say he fought the battle of Simon and his Teddy Leiser. (chuckle). He [REDACTED/brother, /younger than John, nice boy, had never worked in the mines. But there was big money in the mines when the war started, the first world war. And Teddy went on what they call the picking tables. You know, picking the rock out from the coal. He didn't go down the mine, he was on the picking table. Well the John's older brother Bill, was with the CNR's, and he had written and said they'd had hand to hand fighting for days and this sort of thing. Then the word came that his brother Joe had been killed at Vimy Ridge. So that was really three that gave their lives to the war. And John was in the army in Victoria. And they had riots at Simon Leiser's. 'He was a German, you see. And he had this retail store.3 And they had a riot there one night. And John, being in the army, was one of those that had to stand guard all night to see that there was no looting. So when the word came that his brother Joe had been killed, he went to the commanding officer and said his brother had been killed and could he go up to Nanaimo for the funeral. So the men got talking to him and he said You mention your brother that got killed, he said, do you have any other family. Oh yes, he said, I have another brother that had hand to hand fighting, and said I lost a brother in an explosion -- surely someone will tell you about that big explosion at the Reserve mine?

Mrs. B: Yes.

Mrs. B: Well John's younger brother Ted, was in that. --So this man looked at him and said Well, I think your parents have had enough, for the time being. He said You go home to Nanaimo, he said, and when we want you, we'll send for you. He said there's a lot of people that haven't three sons and haven't sent any yet. [REDACTED]

Mrs. B: Yes. --Well Simon Leiser then had a store in Victoria?

Mrs. B: Yes. [REDACTED] After he'd been at Wellington. He moved from Wellington to Victoria.

Mrs. B: And I've seen ads in the Ladysmith Chronicle for him too, so I was wondering if he had a store in Ladysmith as well. He must have been quite a big store keeper then for the day.
Mrs. B. Yes he was. He was a German, you see. And there had been some German atrocities in the paper or something, and so they took 'em out on poor old Simon Leiser. (laugh).

MB: And do you remember anything yourself about Simon Leiser?

Mrs. B. No, except that when I was a child some of my relatives lived out around Lake Wellington, and I do remember going into the store once with my -- but I was just a little kid.

MB: One person told me, his name was Jim Galloway, he is 92, he told me that it was Simon Leiser that let him go on credit for up to $75 during the strike. That's all I knew about Simon Leiser.

Mrs. B. Well when my dad had that accident, my great aunt, Mrs. Rowe, had that store on Haliburton Street. And she carried us. Until Dad got back and started work again.

MB: That was important, these people who --

Mrs. B. Because there was no help in those days.

MB: They started some fraternal organizations, I think, during those days --

Mrs. B. Well, Dad was in the Knights of Pythias, but what with going camping, and one thing and another, Mum expecting this baby, they had let his dues lapse. He got nothing! We had a pretty bad time. My sister Dorothy, she was a teacher out at John Barsby for years. Dorothy Martin? Dorothy Devlin she was. She was born just two weeks before that accident. Now she's going on 72!

MB: Were there many different nationalities here when you were a girl?

Mrs. B. Chinese. We lived on Victoria Road between the Indian Reserve, and Chinatown. And I remember the Chinese going up over the ridges from Victoria Road from Number One mine. Single file. Always single file. Always one behind the other. And Chinatown was just up behind us. And we used to go up there on Chinese New Year and they'd give us leechee nuts. (chuckle).

MB: What sort of places did they live in?

Mrs. B. Oh, not bad places. Most of them -- see, it was just a single street. Most of them were stores in front, and rooms upstairs and down in behind. Not individual houses, more they lived right in that space.

MB: Did they grow their own food?

Mrs. B. Oh yes, I think some of them had truck gardens, probably.

MB: Did they dress any differently from anyone else, can you remember?

Mrs. B. Well, when we'd go up on Chinese New Year you'd hardly recognize them, as those miners going back and forth up that trail, because they'd have their satin dress, mandarin collars, and the long sleeves, little round caps, you wouldn't know that they were the same ones, really.

MB: They had pigtails?
Mrs. B: And I remember once going up there, one of the big wigs had died, and the coffin was in the middle of the street, and they would come and put he money, and I remember they had money on his eyes, and anybody -- I suppose that's the way they contributed, they put money in his coffin. And of course that intrigued kids like us, you know. And right in the middle of the street, and there he was, in this coffin. Of course we had to go and have a look.

MB: Oh yes. And I guess they allowed everyone to --

Mrs. B: Oh yes, they did. Because you see, I was practically born in, you know, just below them. And I went to school with (Gana Noy) and (Yok In Far) I can't remember his name, and different ones, and the Chinese Mission was right between our house and Chinatown. If you -- that's building's gone now -- I was always friendly with the missionaries in there. The Dickman's, they had these three girls...little girls, (Bonnie?) and Esther, and I can't remember the other one's name, Margaret, maybe. And I used to play with those kids. And I was always friendly with them.

MB: The missionaries were white missionaries? Or Chinese?

Mrs. B: They were Chinese. And they taught English to the Chinese. I remember for a little while, my older sister Rose was a teacher, the same as my younger one, and we used to go up to the Mission, and we would try and teach these young fellows English, and I always remember, I asked this one to spell egg, you know. (E-G-G-Eggie) You know. (laughs).

MB: How come that there were children. I didn't think that there were any women, Chinese women allowed.

Mrs. B: Oh yes, sure, there were Chinese women.

MB: So they could bring their wives?

Mrs. B: Oh yes. Those that could afford it, I guess. Oh sure, they had Wesley Thom, he was the son of the missionary that came later, Wesley, a smart little kid. And those three Dickson girls. And Yok In Far, her father had a restaurant later on downtown. They come from New York once in a while now to visit Nanaimo. Of course they're like me, they're up in years. Oh sure, there were lots of Chinese women.

MB: You mentioned the name of Thom. Would these Thoms who have the clothing stores be some descendants of theirs?

Mrs. B: No, they just had one son, these Thoms. They may be related. But they just had the one son, Wesley. His mother would get on the verandah and she'd yell out, "Wesley - a!" (laughs).

MB: They tried to become Canadianized right away then, by calling their boy Wesley

Mrs. B: Oh yes, he went to South Ward school. If I'd thought about it I could have had some old pictures out, and you'd have seen several Chinese.
Mrs. B: Too bad you hadn't got Charlie York. He had that store downtown. He's dead now. Charlie York was here for a long, long time. --

I remember when there was quite an influx of immigrants from England, that was before the war, I think. There were ever so many. A lot of the families are still here, you know, descendants.

MB: Do you remember when you first saw them?

Mrs. B: Yes. A lady across the street, lost her husband, and she took a number of boarders, of these fellows that came out to work in the mines. And a lot of people took them in as boarders in those days.

MB: They were mainly single men then, were they?

Mrs. B: yes, until they could afford to send for their families.

MB: And what was your impression of the way they spoke?

Mrs. B: Well we thought it was rather odd. But of course, Dad was an Englishman. He did come from the North of England. And then I married John, who came from within six miles of where my dad lived in Cumberland, England.

MB: And did the English people when they landed, dress any differently from the people here?

Mrs. B: Well yes, I think most of them wore what we called costumes, a long skirt, and a suit coat. When they first came. And the mens' suits were cut a little bit different. Shorter jackets, for one thing. You could always tell. And a lot of them wore caps. Cloth cap. Yes, they were a little different, but it didn't take them long to --

MB: But here what kind of hats did men wear then? In Canada.

Mrs. B: Oh, kind of like a fedora. I remember though when my Grandfather Drake was a sherriff, and he used to wear his top hat to work. Top, black silk hat. And always a white shirt with a string tie. And frock coat. I remember that.

MB: Did he have an office?

Mrs. B: In the courthouse, yes.

MB: What was his name?

Mrs. B: Samuel Drake.

MB: Do you remember whether he had much to do with rowdy miners, or --

Mrs. B: No, not so much. When he first came, he was a prison guard. And he used to have to take the chain gangs out to dig, to make the roads. And at one time the citizens put a complaint in that they were making the roads too wide! Costing the taxpayers too much! And Grandpa was in charge of the chain gang.

MB: And why did they call them the chain gang?

Mrs. B: They were taken to work, with chains to their
MB: So that when they worked, you could hear the chains?

Mrs. B: I s'pose you could, yes. And I heard the story. I've got it somewhere, that I had printed in the Colonist, and my great-grandparents moved to Wellington, my grandfather never was a miner, but -- when they were getting -- the Hudson Bay had built this ship the Princess Royal, to bring them out, and in Drierly Hill, somebody had seen this notice in the paper about wanting these miners, and got talking among themselves, and they decided to put their names down. Well grandfather hadn't considered, because he wasn't a miner, he was a carpenter. But however, the George S. Pearsons, George S. Pearson had that big grocery store where the Metropolitan is now, were coming out, they had to cancel on account of somebody was sick. So Grandfather Malpass came in their stead. And that's how come he landed here.

I suppose he worked in the mines for some time, but I'm a little hazy, because I didn't think to ask all these things. (End of Side 1)

Grandmother had come to Nanaimo by stagecoach, that was the only way mode of travel. And on the way back, you see, the driver got out at the Quarterway, out here, I think, and a young man hopped into the stage coach from out of the woods. White, scared. And he said that they were after him. So, my grandmother, I guess she had lots of nerve, you know. She said, you look like a nice young man. Get under the seat. And she and the other woman put their voluminous skirts over him. Well later on when these men that were hunting him -- the police, I suppose they'd be -- Grandmother threatened them with an umbrella if they didn't get out pronto. And they did! So after the man came out of the Quarterway, I suppose he went in and had a few beers, and k whipped up the horses, I guess he'd be quite surprised when this young man touched him on the shoulder and asked him to stop the horses, he wanted to get out! Then he ran into the woods, and he'd been an escaped prisoner. --So when Grandfather Drake heard that, of course, he was fit to go through the ceiling, because after all, he was in charge of these prisoners! He wasn't a bit pleased with his mother in law for doing a trick like that! (laugh).

MB: And what hotel was it that your grandfather had --

Mrs. B: They called it the Wellington Hotel, I think they still do, don't they? But they died within six months of each other. In their 60's. People didn't live so long in those days. They had quite a family. I have a little story, I had it printed in the Times a year ago Christmas. Where I mentioned about this big red box that we used to sit on. (tells about the red box her grandfather made and it finally broke with children sitting on it.)
Grandfather had made this box, painted it red, and put on rope handles, to bring their gear. It had come on the Princess Royal. Kids sat on the box at the table at Christmas.

Wellington was a very busy place in those days. Coal mines up there. And that's where Uncle Willie put this phone line down to Departure Bay. And my mother says she has seen 16 ships in for coal in at one time. Sailing vessels. It was very busy.

MB: Well some of those ornately built homes we see in pictures were probably built by your grandfather.

Mrs. B: Could be, yes. Of course, grandfather went into the hotel business, the saloon business.

MB: And then the buildings were moved up to Ladysmith anyway, it later.

Mrs. B: Dorothy, my sister, and I, we took a ride around after the parade the other day. She came here for lunch, and we took a ride round Wellington and Westwood Lake, and we both remarked that in 1914, we were camping at the bay, and there was a garden party on the Loudon property at Wellington. And we walked, a group of us, up from Departure Bay, up to Wellington, to go to this garden party. And I think it was George Coombes, or somebody come out and they said, "We're at war! We're at war with Germany!"

MB: What was the garden party like?

Mrs. B: Well, chairs and tables, on the side, and tea. A church tea. You know, outside in the garden. On their own property. They had lawns. The house is still there, I think. But

MB: I saw it the other day, a huge expanse of acreage.

MB: Yes. Yes. Just around the house they had these tables set up.

MB: That would be Bill Loudon's...

Mrs. B: His parents. He'll be my age. It would be his parents that had the garden party.

MB: What was the house like?

Mrs. B: It's a tall grey house, I think. That was the day war was declared, the day of that garden party, August the 14th, 1914.

Mrs. B: Bill Loudon went to war. He told me.

Mrs. B: Yes, sure he did.

MB: And when he came back — I think this was through the Soldier Settlement Board, Mr. Dunsmuir had put up 700 acres of land for the soldier settlement, and nobody bought any of it, so he bought it all. So he sold it the other day. He told me.

MB: Sports and entertainment. What did you used to do in those days?

Mrs. B: The church, really, on Haliburton Street. My mother and father
were the first to be married there, December 3rd, 1892. And the church was our life. We didn't have money to do much else. And my mother was secretary of the Ladies' Aid for forty years. Sang in the choir, and my dad played the cornet in the choir. And I went to Sunday School till I was 21, we all did, as kids. That was our life. And then we had the Band of Hope, and Prayer Meeting, and this sort of thing. And my mother was always interested in singing. She had a nice contralto voice, which I take after my dad, and I don't have any voice at all! And she used to sing in the Messiah. Fred Bates (?) used to come from Vancouver and conduct the local people, and they put on some beautiful concerts. In the old days we had beautiful concerts! Nothing has been put on since like any of them.

MB: This what Mr. Lewis said. And after a while the musical standard in Nanaimo went down and down, but he thinks it's coming back up again. And there's a Mr. Lewis at Parksville who still conducts the Messiah. He's up in years too, 74 I think.

Mrs. B: Well my mother sang in the Messiah many many years. I did once sing in the Messiah along with some other young girls, but I had no voice, but they put me in anyway.

MB: So that the church was the most important social centre?

Mrs. B: Yes, it was. Everything revolved around the church. Church suppers, --we put on some excellent concerts at Haliburton Street. Excellent.

MB: Is it the church that is still there now?

Mrs. B: No, they closed it a few years ago, when they had this team ministry, united, sort of thing. But that's where I was practically raised. In fact, my mother went to choir practice when she was carrying my sister Dorothy, and I was told afterwards that they used to make bets as to whether Mrs. Devlin would be back next week or not, or whether that baby was going to be born on the altar! (laughter).

MB: What denomination was it?

Mrs. B: Methodist.

MB: Do you remember the ministers' names?

Mrs. B: Oh yes, I should! Rev. Roberts, Rev. Hedley, Wingfield, and Burnett, and Rev. Bare (?) -- I think he was the first one that I knew. As a kid. The rev. W.W. Bare. Bauer. German descent.

MB: Did your father play soccer or baseball?

Mrs. B: No, but rather a funny story: The boys used to, rather funny you know. The cricket grounds where they used to play baseball, over 'here, you know where it is now. The boys after Sunday school, they'd run with their Bibles up the hill to see the matches. And one of our sneaky
to see which kids were doing this. (laughter).

D: Question re grandfather who was sherriff.
Mr. F: He came from Devon. He was born 6 miles within Sir Francis Drake's mansion. We're supposed -- everybody laughs -- to be descended from his brother John. Because my uncle Jim Halpass sent away and had the family tree one time. John Drake. Sir Francis had no sons. And I have been to Tavistock, and there's Sir Francis' statue in the square. And I've seen the Tavy river that grandpa used to talk about.

D: I was born in Devon. (some conversation re Devon).
Mrs. F: My grandpa went to work when he was only a kid. I think he got sixpence a week, something like that. And he said when he brought home a shilling, his mother was so pleased. Yes. And/Grandpa came here in 1858, and he came through the States, he heard the big guns of the Civil War.

And he landed in Nanaimo, oh he worked in the States for a while. In the silver mines. And then the man that owned the silver mines died, and he didn't get any pay, and up in the hills, and they were rained out, and he said the worst part of their life was they couldn't get any salt. Without salt. And they came down from the mountains and rode on an old wagon with somebody and if they got off the wagon they were chased by wild animals. This is was crossing the States. And they eventually came to San Francisco and Joe Hugo's (?) uncle staked them to come up to Nanaimo. And then from here, Grandpa Drake went up in the Caribou for quite a few years.

D: Oh -- gold rush?
Mrs. F: Yes, in the gold rush. And I had a piece about him in the Vancouver Sun Magazine one time. He did make some money. And it was through being up in the Caribou, it was winter, and it was cold, and the goldfields were closed, they couldn't dig, and he was starting the foundation of a house for the new minister that was coming up from Victoria. And one day he was sawing logs of doing something, and he was whistling Lift Up Your Heads, Oh Ye Gates, from the Messiah, and he saw this man standing, listening to him, and the man said Well where did you learn that? --Well, he said, when I was in Devonshire I belonged to the band, and I played it many a time.

So it turned out this was the Rev. Reynard from Victoria, and it was his house that was going to be built, he was the -- been called to the Caribou. Captain Davis, do you know him, that used to be on the ferries?

D: No.
Mrs. F: Well you can get in touch with him, he can tell you all kinds.
His mother was a Reynard. And it was his grandfather that was called to the Caribou a to be the minister. and whose house my grandfather was starting. So he said, When I live here, he said, I'd like to start a band. He said
if I send to Victoria and get instruments, he said, will you play them?

And grandfather said he'd be glad to. And that was the start of him on this musical career.

HE: He was quite a cultured man.

Mrs. B: He was self-taught. Because he certainly didn't get many years at school. He had to go to work very early. But he was self taught. And he was a very intelligent man. And he could transpose, and music, later on and had his little orchestra, and played the sax and obo, and (cannot think of the other instrument he could play).

He stayed up there quite a few years, until the Rev. Reynard had a call to come to Nanaimo, then to St. Paul's church. And he wrote to grandpa. And he asked him to come here. And at that time Grandpa was doing pretty well and knew everybody up there, he was a little bit loathe to leave. But however he did come, and that's what started all our gang! He went to St. Paul's, he used to play the cornet, and the other instruments in the choir, and one day one fellow said to him Let's go to Wallace Street church, and grandpa said I should go to church, I play in the choir.

But the man said Oh come on, let's go to Wallace Street. And that was his downfall. He went to Wallace Street, and there was little Rhoda Halpass up in the choir, and he said, I marked that little lady for my own! (laughter). So they were married Christmas day. --No, my grandmother was born Christmas day after her people came out from England in 1856, Grandma was born 1855 Christmas day. Rhoda Halpass. So then she and grandpa were married when she was 17, Christmas Eve.

I well remember when I was a youngster, we used to run down to the Indian reserve. The street run right down to the Indian reserve, and if there was snow on the street we got our sleds and we'd go down over the track, down practically into the water. And then in the summer we'd go down and go swimming, and no place to undress except behind a bush, And one time there was quite a hullaballoo, and there was an old Indian lady called Mary Cracco, and she had about ten dogs, and one had only three legs. He used to push himself along. She was drunk. And grandpa and a bunch of men were trying to get her into Bill Ritchie's wagon. They commandeered anything that was around, you know. In those days, you know. There were no black Marrias, or anything else! The first one that was ever taken to jail went in a wheelbarrow, and then he was taken to the Bastion. He was drunk. But this he was trying to hold Mary, and she kept kicking up her legs, and Grandpa was trying to pull her skirts down, I always remember that! And she'd kick up (laughter) --"You kids get away!"

HE: Well (laughter) isn't that something -- about law and order in those days!
Mrs. B: Of course Grandpa when he became sherriff was more for sales, you know. Like somebody would go broke and he'd have to have a sherriff's sale, you know. And sometimes my dad used to go and help him, and Grandpa was great for writing and he had lovely writing.

MB: I guess there are probably some samples of it around the museum or the Bastion.

Mrs. B: I doubt it very much, because he was not one to want to be publicized at all.

MB: But in the record books of the law, possibly?

Mrs. B: Well, they'd be in the court house. I guess so. Grandpa was in Barkerville when it burned to the ground. He came up from the slope wherever it was, and Racock the big hotel was on fire, and the dancing girls were all milling around, and all the things were thrown out of the stores, and houses, and they didn't throw them far enough, even things got burned outside, you know. They didn't have a proper water supply or anything like that. But anyway (laugh) a keg of whiskey got thrown out, and Grandpa and some of his cohorts they just nailed on to that keg of whisky and took it to their cabin. And the next day there was a delegation of about ten men, they wanted that keg of whisky. And grandpa said possession was nine points of the law, and they weren't going to get it. (laugh).

MB: I think the church is the only building left. I've been up there.

Mrs. B: Well Grandpa played the first day that was opened. He in that old church. St. Saviour's church. Well Grandpa played bassoon. They had some women in the choir, and & they had beautiful voices, and Grandpa said the opening of that church was really something that day. And they happened to get hold of a bunch of Welshmen, and you know how they can sing. And it was really a very gala day.

MB: Did your grandfather ever say anything about conditions in England as compared with out here?

Mrs. B: Oh they were very very poor in England. They were really poor. In Devon. He thought this was a wonderful country.

My mother tells me that the men used to go down where Terminal Avenue is now and shoot deer.

MB: Speaking of Terminal Avenue, I'm told that where the ravine was, Fraser Street, was where the red light district of Nanaimo was.

Mrs. B: Oh definitely!

MB: And how did you feel about that when you were a child?
Mrs. B: I didn't know what they meant when they were talking about the red light district. I do remember once, I was always a little bit bold, I suppose, my aunt -- my mother's youngest sister, was six weeks older than me, so we were great friends, and we both had a bike. And one day we felt especially bold, and we went up through Commercial Street, and then we came down on Fraser, and some woman yelled Have you seen the ice man? And I nearly fell off my bike. (laugh). But I didn't know for a long time what this red light district was. My mother said we'll just don't ever go down there again. She said, Little girls don't go down in those places. But I didn't know what it was about.

(Discussing various matters not pertaining to miners).

MB: Do you remember when the ship blew up?

Mrs. B: Oh, do I ever remember that! We had a fireplace up on Victoria Road, and Mum said, I wish you'd take the ashes out. And just as I went to take them out, a lot of soot came down the chimney. --Before the explosion! And then the explosion came. And all these ashes came out at me! Oh, it was a cold miserable day, snowing on the ground, it was just horrible! A lot of people -- windows went out, and downtown it looked a shambles. When the Oscar blew up.

(End of interview).