Samuel Dean at number 6, 1420 Estevan Road, Nanaimo, interviewed by Shirley Ramsey for the Coal Tyee Historical Project.

SR: Mr. Dean, could you please tell me when you came to Nanaimo or if you were born here.

SD: I was born in Scotland, Glasgow, Scotland. I came here when I was two years old.

SR: Thank you. What age were you when you started in the mine?

SD: Sixteen.

SR: Now, I have a list of mines that you worked in. First, the Harewood mine, beginning at 1917. Could you tell me please the approximate location of the Harewood mine as close as you can. Ya.

SC: Well, it was up Harewood Road, that's all I remember.

SR: Hummum.

SC: Right at the top of Harewood Road. And you walked in.

SR: So, it's on the south slope of Benson and it's up on the Harewood area on Harewood Road. Hum. You started at the age of sixteen, you told me.

SC: Ya.

SR: Can you describe, how you started work and who you went to see about a job and things like that?

SC: Oh, my dad got me the job, because he worked up there.

SR: Did he work in the same mine?

SC: Ya. And he got me a job, and I started runnin' winch. And then I started rope riding and then I got my leg broke there and then when I got better I went to Number 1 mine.

SR: O,K. We won't go on to Number 1 yet. I'd like to ask you a little bit more about Harewood. How was it when you went up on your first day at work at the age of sixteen. Can you remember anything about that first day at work?
SC: Well, a little bit scared. Everything is so dark, you know. You didn't have electric lights and nothin' in then. They put them in later. When I started, you went in in the dark just with your safety lamp.

SR: Ya. Was it an open lamp or closed?

SC: Oh, closed.

SR: Did you go in the mine with your father and work with him?

SC: Oh no, no. He was on his own and I was on my own. So, the boss took me in and told me where I was goin' to work.

SR: Did he put you with someone or were you alone?

SC: Oh, they put me with somebody to show me how to run the winch.

SR: I see, humhum.

SC: So, after that, I was on my own.

SR: Now, this winch job was underground, then, It wasn't ...

SC: Oh, yes, underground. Sure.

SR: How far under did you go to run this winch.

SC: It was level all the way in and then you went up a little bit to a slope.

SR: Was there a shaft first or did you just walk right into the slope?

SC: You walked straight in level.

SR: I see, humhum.

SC: And then the slopes went down where the diggers was workin' and I pulled the cars up from there.

SR: The winch was used to pull the cars?

SC: Yes. You let the empty cars down and brought the full ones up.

SR: How long did you stay on your winch job?

SC: Oh, quite a long time.

SR: More than a year?

SC: Not more, no. not more.

SR: Slightly less. Aha. Can you remember anything about the Harewood mine in particular that you 'ld like to say now?

SC: Oh, it was nothing particular, it was just a coal mine.
SR: Well, was it in any way different from the other mines?
SC: No, coal mines are all pretty much the same.
SR: Right. Humhum. As far as accidents or anything like that are concerned, you were injured there. How did this happen?
SC: I broke my right leg. I was rope riding then. I had finished the winch job and I was rope riding. And I let down on to the and I was goin' a little bit too fast. I put my back, trying to hold 'em and I bumped into the car that was already on the and I broke my leg. That was the last of Harewood for me. When I come out I went to Number 1.
SR: Could you tell me what it was like to have an accident in those days? What happened to you from the minute you were injured? Did the miners rescue you, take you out and ...
SC: Oh, they took me out, ya. They took me to the hospital.
SR: Ya. And what was the old hospital like?
SC: Oh, it was terrible.
SR: (laughter) Not very big at that date?
SC: Well, there was quite a few beds, I just forget, how many,
SR: And you are put out to stretch your leg, were you?
SC: Ya.
SR: You remember that?
SC: Ya. They put a cast on right up, you know.
SC: And that was on for quite a while.
SR: Who was your doctor, Do you remember?
SC: They got ol' doctor Hall.
SR: Could be. He's been interviewed also.
SC: Hey.
SR: Yes. How long were you in the hospital with the cast or did you go home immediately?
SC: I was in for --- what --- ten days, or eleven days, I think. Then I went home.
SR: And your leg healed all right for your next job then.
SC: Oh, sure.
SR: You got a long working experience here. Now, when you went from Harewood to Number 1, your father was also a miner, did he stay at Harewood?
SC: No, he went to Number 1 too.
SR: Oh, so, both of you went together?
SC: Yes.
SR: How long did you stay off work with this accident?
SC: About three months.
SR: Three months. And then the cast came off and you went to Number 1,
SC: Ya.
SR: Could you describe Number 1?
SC: Oh, it was a big, big mine. It went down six-hundred feet in a cage.
SR: Hmmm.
SC: And my first job was what, now... Running winch down there too. But it was bigger winch than the one in Harewood.
SR: Oh yes. Just go on and say anything you like.
SC: And after that I was taking grips of the rope. The cars came up, you know, and they had grips on 'em. You took 'em off and hooked 'em up to the other cars and they all went into the shaft bottom.
SR: You didn't have any accidents there?
SC: No, not there, no.
SR: And a big mine, there was always a lot of miners around and things like this. Was there anything you noticed about Number 1? What date did you say you started at Number 1? I've got you down for 1917 for Harewood, it would be about two years later at Number 1? Ya. About that. Ya.
SR: L919.
SC. Ya. Around there.
SR: Did you notice the stable area?
SC: Oh, ya. They had a big stable. There was a lot of horses and mules in there. A lot of them. And this was right on the shaft bottom, but on that side...
SR: Humhum. The left side.
SC: ... And the work was down this side.
SR: Oh, I see, the opposite site to the working area.
SC: Ya.
SR: Did you meet a lot of miners there? And get to know quite a few of them?
SC: Oh, I knew them all, pretty near.
SR: Did you?
SC: Oh, sure. We all knew each other in them days.
SR: Humhum. In spite of the number, Yes. Now, what did you find different about Number 1 other then the size. Was there a lot of surface buildings in those days on the site of Number 1?
Do you remember the surface site at all?
SC: Well, there is a blacksmith shop and a lamp cabin and a big office, but that was about all.
SR: Ya.
SC: And there is the hoist over here.
SR: Now, as far as Number 1 goes, could you describe, how the coal came out of it?
SC: Well, it came up ...
SR: Just follow it through. It came out on cars,
SC: Ya.
SR: And then up the hoist.
SC: Ya.
SR: And where did it go from there?
SC: Well, it went on to the pickin' table and then down into the big cars, The had kids on the pickin' table to pick the rock out,
SR: Were they very young kids?
SC: Oh, some of them were pretty young, yes.
SR: Would you say around twelve or something?
SC: Oh, fourteen, I guess.
SR: About fourteen.
SC: Some could be twelve, I guess, they could, ya.
SR: Hum. Did you see any Chinese at the picking table?
SR: None.

SC: The Chinese was gone then.

SR: Oh, Aha. So, now, from the picking tables, the coal went where?

SC: Down into the big cars.

SR: And these were box cars or what kind of cars?

SC: Not box cars. Big open cars.

SR: That's what I meant yes. And then from where did it go after it went into the big cars.

SC: Up on to the wharf.

SR: And then it went...

SC: Into the ships.

SR: Ya. And then there was a tipple or something to...

SC: Oh, that was on the pit head.

SR: Oh, on the pit head. I see.

SC: They dumped it and it went down on the pickin' tables and the kids picked the rock out and then it went down into the big cars.

SR: Ya.

SC: And from there up onto the wharf.

SR: Humhum. Now, how far away was the wharf.

SC: Oh, Oh, from here to the highway.

SR: Hum. Eight-hundred yards or something like that.

SC: I don't think, quite that far. But quite a way.

SR: Ya. five-hundred or something like that. So, there wasn't a great distance from the loading area to the mine, there was quite a short distance.

Oh, no, it wasn't that far. No.

SR: Do you remember seeing any of the ships load?

SC: Oh, sure.

SR: Could you describe maybe just one of them?

SC: Oh, I don't know just ... I and loadin' them but I just can't remember her. Of course, they had a big shute and it went down into
the ship.
SR: Humhum.
SC: you know.
SR: How were the box cars actually dumped?
SC: They tipped right over.
SR: So, they had something to tip it on.
SC: They turned 'em upside down.
SR: Aha. And then went down the chute and into the...
SC:... into the ship.
SR: So, that the coal was loaded into the bare hold of the ship.
SC: Ya.
SR: Just like that.
SC: Ya.
SR: How would that coal would be brought out of there again?
SC: Where it went to? Oh, I don't know how they got it out.
SR: (laughter) You don't know where it went at all, do you?
To San Francisco or...
SC: Oh, it went all over the world.
SR: Ya, Great. Humhum. Now we've got the work area taken in. You said that you recall a couple things before you started in the mines, that happened when you were in school. For example, you remember hearing about a ship blowing up by the name of Oscar when you were in the classroom.
SC: Ya.
SR: What classroom were you in that day?
SC: Oh, dear, I forget now. I can see it all yet, I just can't explain it.
SR: One of the old schools? Was it one of wards?
SC: It was in Quesnel school.
SR: Quesnel, humhum. How did you hear about Oscar blowing up?
SC: Well, some of the workers fell right in.
SR: Oh, Goodness,
SC: Right on top of ... I know, one window fell in on top of a kid, it wasn't me, I forget who it was now. So, that's how we knew about the Oscar explosion.

SR: I say. (laughter) What did you do then. Did the teacher rush over and help the student...

SC: Well, he sent us all home.

SR: All home.

SC: Oh sure.

SR: And the teacher, the school ....

SC: No more school that day. (laughter)

SR: School stayed closed for how long. A couple days or so.

SC: I think, it was two days and then we went back.

SR: Humhu.

SC: Because they had to fix the windows and that.

SR: For one thing, ya. How was the old school heated? Did you have potbelly woodburner in the middle of it. Or was it central heating.

SC: It was central heating.

SR: Central heating in those days, ya. Do you remember your teacher at all? During that explosion?

SC: I think, it was Miss Pawden. I think she is dead now, of course. I think it was Miss Pawden. Elsie Pawden was her name, I think. It could have been her, it could have been Miss Harrer.

SR: Oh, yes. Pauline Harrer.

SC: There were two Harrer, you know.

SR: Oh. Ya. So, it might have been the other one.

SC: It was Harriet and Pauline, I think.

SR: Gee, that is quite a record for Nanaimo school teaching, Pauline, yes. Do you remember any of your other old school teachers or anything before you started in the mine?

SC: (laughter) Indistinct

SR: You were in school until 16, so you had most of the work done by then until... how far did you go?

SC: I was ready to go into high school when I quit. I quit public school to go to work.
SR: To go to work.
SC: Ya. Because the kids were a-l makin' money and I said, "Well, it's about time that I'm making some money too."
SR: I see.
SC: My first wage in Harewood was 3.21$ a day.
SR: Oh, that's wonderful that you remember that. What was your last wage were we are at it?
SC: I think, I got 9.30 or 9.50$ a day. That was the highest wage I had in the mine.
SR: What year was that? When you finished at the last mine?
SC: I think, that would be 1946 or 47.
SR: Mmm.
SC: Then I went saw milling after that.
SR: Oh, you had a... very experienced. There was another thing that recalled in the history of Nanaimo, the bankrobbery.
SC: That was 1924, I'm pretty sure.
SR: Can you remember any details of how you found out about it? Or?
SC: Oh, everybody knew about it. It was in a-l the papers and everything.,
SR: So, that's how you recall it. Reading it. And hearing people talking about it? Did you see any of it yourself?
SC: No.
SR: Were you in any of these mines at the close of them?
SC: Oh, ya. Number 8 peetered out.
SR: And you were there to the end of both of those?
SC: Both of 'em, sure.
SR: Now, we've gone through a little bit of Number 1, Is there anything you can remember you and the fellows talked about or doing about that's sticking out in your mind in Number 1 in those days?
SC: No, not really. We talked a lot about football, because Nanaimo had a pretty good football team at that time, you know,
SR: Oh, yes.
SC: And that's what we kind of talked about as much as anything,
SR: Some of them were on the team, were they?
SC: Oh, no, oh no. we were too young to play.
SR: Oh, I see, they were a little older than you on the team then.
Now, from Number 1, how long did stay at Number 1?
SC: Oh, I forget now.... About three years, I guess.
SR: What made you move to Protection? Was it part of the same ,
SC: I got layd off in Number 1. And then I went to Protection,
SR: So, I got hired on Protection?
SC: Ya.
SR: You went over by barge and...
SC: Yes.
SR: Boat. On the WEfi Two, was it?
SC: Ya.
SR: What was on the surface at Protection, when you crossed the harbour,
was there a wharf there?
SC: Just a place for the scow to go in.
SR: A place for the scow?
SC: And then you jumped off and run to the cage. (laughter)
SR: Oh. And the cage lowered you by .. how far?
SC: Six-hundred feet. Number 1 was the same. Six-hundred feet.
SR: Do you remember anyone recalling a mine cage drop accident?
SC: I was in Number 1 when that happened. That was 1918, wasn't it?
SR: I have it here, but Just haven't looked it up,
SC: I think, it was 1918.
SR. Ya. Now, what happened that day. Did any of you help rescue...
SC: no, no, no.
SR: Humhum. What information did you get about the cage drop?
SC: Well, I was working in the bottom of the rope, and the
phone started ringing. Somebody phoned and said the cages went down. That's
were I heard it from.
SR: From the phone, humhum.
SR: How many were killed in that drop?
SC: 16 in that cage.
SR: Aha. And you went to Protection about a year after that or so?
SR: For maybe a couple of years?
SC: Ya.. Ya, I was in Number 1 when that happened and I went to Protection afterwards.
SR: Now, did you notice any difference between Protection and Harewood and Number 1.
SC: Oh, Number 1 had high coal.
SR: High.
SC: Protection didn't. Protection had low coal.
SR: So, it was harder working?
SC: Well, it wasn't harder working but it was --- we didn't have to get on your knees. In Northfield, you had to get on your knees.
SR: Oh. Aha. I see. Well, what about the water problems at Protection. Did you have any problems with explosions or water problems or anything?
SC: No, no.
SR: They were all takin' care of?
SC: Oh, sure.
SR: Good pump system, and that,
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: From Protection, you went to Mordon. Now, what caused you to move? Did Protection run out? Finish off or?
SC: I don't know. I must have been layd off or something. Or they must have closed down for a while. I just forget now. But I went to Mordon.
SR: Oh, that's south. Now, the Mordon mine has--- I think still has the structure there.
SC: It had.
SR: But, how deep was it, and can you describe it, I haven't run into to anyone from Mordon yet.
SC: What do you mean?
SR: Could you describe the structure of Morden. Did you go into the ground in a shaft or did you just walk ...
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: It was a shaft?
SC: Shaft.
SR: Humhum. Anything else you can tell me about Morden?
SC: Well, they put the coal cars on the cage, it went up and it dumped and it come right back again.
SR: So, it was a very up-to-date ....
SC: (laughter) Well, in them days, maybe.
SR: Ya.
SC: But it wasn't such a great mine. I have to pack a dead man out of there.
SR: Would you tell me about that, please.
SC: Well, I think it was a fall of coal or fall or rock and he was dead when they got him. I have to pack him out. I forget how many, even, oh, I think, six, I guess, packed him up to the slope, you know ....
SR: And put him on the cage. You went up and down on a cage as well as in the car. Was there two shafts at Morden? One for coal ...
SC: A double, you mean?
SR: Ya.
SC: I think so, One was going down, the other one was going up ...
SR: It was a balanced system. Ya.
SC: Now, what about the surface ... Oh, pardon, me. Did you ever find out who the dead man was?
SC: Oh, I knew it that time, but I wouldn't know now.
SR: You've forgotten his name?
SC: Oh, sure, it's too long, ago, ya.
SR: How long did you stay at Morden's?
SC: About a year and a half, I think.
SR: Humhum. Were you there ...
SC: And it closed down and we all and we all had money comin'.
SR: Oh, yes. I hear about that. How much?
SC: I had a 120$ comin' at me.
SR: Oh, oh, a lot of wages ...
SC: I waited for a year for that. My wife was in the hospital havin' a baby so the money came in handy at that time.
SR: It did come to you then, did it?
SC: Oh, well, I got it, yes. I got the full thing.
SR:Aha. Great.
SC: I waited a year for it. (laughter)
SR: Do you remember the company that owned the Mordon mine?
SC: No, I forget the name now. It could have been the Vancouver Coal company but I'm not sure.
SR: Aha. How were working conditions at Mordon, were they good? Or was there more explosions or...
SC: Oh, no, there was no explosions. No, no. We just had ..., the one dead man
SR: He was the victim of the cave-in, was he?
SC: I think the roof caved in and killed him.
SR: Nothing exploded then.
SC: Oh, no explosions.
SR: Now, at Mordon, is there anything else you can tell me about Mordon. You remember ah, any structures on the surface that aren't there now? Or anything like this.
SC: There wasn't much on the surface.
SC: We did have a place for the coal cars to get the coal, you know.
SR: You got paid through the bank then, you didn't go through any office or anything on the site?
SC: No, no. no.
SR: I see. So, the company operated more or less just mining facilities and that was it on the site?
SC: That was all, ya.
SR: You feel, that there is a reason to re-open Mordon?
Is there--- you feel that there is a lot of coal on that site?
SC: I don't about there but I know that there is coal out in Cedar
district.
SR: That hasn't been touched yet.
SC: Ya.
SR: Humhum. What site ...
SC: There is coal in Reserve mine down. They knew that there is lots of
c coal in there, but they couldn't get it. The coal is too hard, too much
drilling and that to get it out. I know there is lots of coal out there.
SR: Reserve mine is a huge mine.
SR: Now, when you were working in Mordon, did you went into the other old
shafts or any of the other old tunnels from any of the other old mine
sites?
SC: Oh, no.
SR: You didn't go that extensive?
SC: No, no.
SR: How long was Mordon open?
SC: Oh, I couldn't tell you that. It was open quite a while though.
SR: Ya. I was so surprised that it didn't pay better than it did. It must
have been the way the rock was in with the coal.
SC: Oh, the coal was pretty clean.
SR: Pretty clean, aha. Now, from Mordon, you went to Northfield. Could you
tell me the approximate location?
SC: No, I went to Reserve from ...
SR: Oh, did you. I don't have Reserve down. O.k. How about your experience
at Reserve mine?
SC: Oh, I had a good job in Reserve mine to work in.
SR: Was it one of the larger one.
SC: Yeah, it was a big mine. Not as big as Number 1, but it was a big mine.
SR: Ya. I understand there was a lot taken out of it too.
SC: Just a minute.
SR: Getting back to Reserve mine, could you say approximately when you started
at Reserve?
SC: No. I forget now.
SR: In the twenties sometimes, was it.
SC: I was twenty-three or four.
SR: Humhum.
SC: Around that time. I'm pretty sure it was.
SR: Did you have any experiences at Reserve that you remember in any way?
SC: I got my leg broke there. I got this leg broke there.
SR: That was your left one this time, the right one the first time?
SR: How did you do that? (chuckle)
SC: Oh, we used to put a rope around a wheel come out of a curve, you know, and the rope flipped off, and the hit me on the leg and broke it,
SR: I see. This wheel and the rope going around it, what was it for, exactly?
SC: The come out of the place even. But it wasn't good.
SR: In other word, it was more or less an accident that couldn't have avoided, it wasn't...
SC: Oh, no, I couldn't do anything about it.
SR: Ya. humhum. What happened to you this time?
SC: Well, I went to the --- the Nanaimo hospital was closed and I went to Ladysmith hospital.
SR; Oh, the old hospital at Ladysmith.
SC: Yes.
SR: I can remember it, just at it was,
SC: And the wife was in there the same time as me.
SR: Oh, dear.
SC: I forget, what she was in for. Bit it was the same time, I know that.
SR: You had a family by then, did you?
SC: I had one daughter. I only still got one daughter.
SR: That was your family. That's great.
SC: My wife died in January this year, you know.
SR: Your wife?
SC: Ya.
SR: Ya. Now., how long were you in Ladysmith hospital this time?
SC: Oh, I guess, about three weeks, maybe, ya, about three weeks. That was all.
SR: Where were you living then?
SC: On Haliburton Street.
SR: Right in Southend?
SC: Humhum.
SR: Where there a lot of houses around you in the '20ies on that stretch?
SC: Oh, sure. There are all still there.
SR: There are all still there. Like as I know. Ya.
Now, on the Reserve mine site, did you ever run into problems with sulphur; any troubles with that?
SC: Oh, yes. Not me, but the miners.
SR: Oh, yes.
SC: I never had no trouble.
SR: Humhum.
SC: But the miners would come up there and they had to be let off the cage they couldn't see nothing.
SR: What about the animals that they used, would they be effected like that too?
SC: No, I don't think so, no. We never had too many animals in Reserve. WE had some, but not too many.
SR: Not as many as Number 1, by no means.
SC: Oh, Number 1 and Protection were loaded with mules and horses,
SR: Humhum. What caused you to go from Reserve to Northfield?
SC: Well, Reserve closed down at that time.
They closed down then and I went to Northfield.
SR: Do you remember how long the closure was before it opened up again?
SC: Oh, I just forget, I guess, it was a year or so. Over a year.
SR: Was it due to a strike or something?
SC: Oh, I guess, they just couldn't sell the coal, I guess.
SR: The price of coal dropped, aha.
SR: Can you describe the location of Northfield mine where you worked?
SC: It was out here, you know. You know where Northfield is at.
SR: I know. But in relation to the old Beban house, was it somewhere near there.
SC: It was close.
SR: Right close by there.
SC: We had a big house across the road from Beban Park. It was just down past there.
SR: Humhum. Is there anything in particular you remember about the Northfield mine? Other than being narrow?
SC: Well, I worked in Coal there, twenty inches high and two feet high and you had -- pads on.
SR: That was hard going.
SC: Was it ever (laughter).
SR: How long were you at Northfield?
SC: Oh, I would say quite a while until they closed down. Not too long either, maybe a year and a half, something like that. And then it closed down.
SR: You are getting in all the closures. (laughter)
Now, creeping up in the twenties and towards the 30ies now, I guess, can you remember what day approximately you started at Number 8, past Grandby to the South?
SC: Oh, no, I couldn't remember the date nor the year. I don't know what it was.
SR: Humhum.
SC: But it was a good mine.
SC: It didn't last too long, but it was a gold mine.
SR: Humhum. So it large deposits that wasn't too hard to get at, is that what you mean?
SC: That was it, ya. There was no mules or horses in that mine.
SR: How did they get the coal out of there?
SC: Well, they had slope that was like that. You couldn't walk up at hardly.
SR: It was a steep slope?
SC: Oh, ya..
SR: But you went in and out of it yourself on foot, is that how...
SC: Ya. We went into another place and walked in.
SR: So, there was no cage necessary, just winches to get the coal out.
SC: No. That was all.
SR: Now, ...
SC: In that mine, you know, you used to have pans. You load the coal on to the pans. There is a man on the bottom, and he'd seven or eight cars all lined up and they load 'em. Usually you load those cars --- a car a minute.
SR: Incredible.
SC: A car a minute.
SR: Humhum.
SC: And chunks of coal like that.
SR: Large.
SC: Oh, big, big coal.
SR: Did you have to lift them? When you picked them, or?
SC: Well, you had to, but your partner --- if I worked next to you --- he would give you a hand to throw it on.
SR: I see.
SC: But the pan is only about that high of where you worked,
SR: Two feet.
SC: You could tip it on yourself anyway.
SR: I see. So, it wasn't too hard to load that way.
SC: Oh, no.
SR: That must have been a cleaner mine, was it, or?
SC: Oh, it was clean, ya.
SR: Really nice mine to work in, you remembered it,
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: I don't know exactly where Number 8 is located. You can't remember anything more about the location of Number 8, can you?
SC: Well, I guess it was past Granby and further out.
SR: South of Granby, ya.
SC: It was not too far where mill used to be.
SR: Lake
SC: Ya. Right around there.
SR: That's quite far out.
SC: I'm glad to mentioned Lake. Ya.
SR: It was not far from there.
SC: Oh, I was there until it was finished.
SR: About how many years would that ...
SC: It was not more than two and a half or three (years) I think. Because it wasn't a big deposit, you know, and you got it out so fast and ...
SR: How did you get to your job at Number 8? Did they have a system where they bused you or did you ride ...
SC: We had a bus.
SR: How did you get to your job at Number 8? Did they have a system where they bused you or did you ride ...
SC: Well, it came close. You had to walk a bit. I walked down two blocks from where I lived. No, one block. I lived down Nicol and I caught the bus on Haliburton.
SR: Now, Mr. Dean, we were talking about the bus system. When you worked at Northfield, did you get the same transportation?

SC: Humhum.

SR: And any of these mines --- the first one you worked at Harewood, was there a bus system way back in 1917.

SC: Ya.

SR: There was. Humhum. So, you went to Harewood from Southend, did you? By bus?

SC: Ya.

SR: What time would you get up in the morning to start your job?

SC: Well, I had to be there at seven. So we got up at six.

SR: Humhum. Now, we are down to Number 8 and we are going all the way down to ...

SC: Mc Kay Lake

SR: Ya. Mc Kay Lake area. When you were at Mc Kay Lake area at Number 8, did you ever go past Granby, was it still standing then?

SC: Oh, it was till standin' but not workin'.

SR: It wasn't working?

SC: Oh, no. not then.

SR: That is before they tore down the buildings and sold them or whatever...

Can you describe...

SC: Still sceloton's there, you know, of the buildings.

SR: Can you describe any of them from as far as you can remember of ranby?

SC: Well, I nver worked in Granby, you know.

SR: Well, just the town site.

SC: No, I don't remember. Nelson Dean will tell you that.

SR: Oh, fine, your cousin.

SC: Because he worked in Granby.
SC: I think his dad worked there too.
SR: Did any of your relatives did work in the mine as well as you? Any of these mines?
SC: Well, my dad and three brothers and me.
SR: Three brothers. Were did your brothers work?
SC: Well, the same as me, all the mines.
SR: They all followed you more or less...
SC: None of them worked in Mordon, I was the only one in Mordon. But the other ones worked in Number 1 and Protection, not Northfield. They was gone to Vancouver by then to go longshorin'. My brother Dave and Andy and Dave, they went to Vancouver. Dave stayed in Vancouver, but he is retired now, the same as me.
SR: Humhum. Did anything ever happen to them, that they would tell you about in their experience in mining.
SC: No. If it happened to them, it would have happened to me, sure.
SR: You were working together pretty well most of the time.
SC: Well, you don't work together, but you are in the same mine.
SR: The same outfit, ya. Now, at Number 8, there was quite a distance in to Number 8, you started a little earlier and get out there, I guess, from your Southend home. You continued to live in Southend most of your married life?
SC: Oh, ya. I lived on Nicol Street 45 years.
SR: Oh, you must have seen some fantastic changes in that area.
SC: I have (chuckle). I sure have.
SR: Were you anywhere near where the soccer and football fields are now? In the Southend-Haliburton Street area.
SC: Well, I tell you, when there was four of us at home workin' and on a Saturday when there was a game on the cricket field,
SR: Oh, the cricket, humhum.
SC: Everybody wanted to get bathed first to get out to the game.
SR: So, you watched the cricket matches, did you?
SC: No, no, football, but they called it the cricket field, it's Robin's Park now.
SR: Robin's Park now.
SC: Ya. So, we had quite a job gettin' all... find a bath and wash hand base and the other one in the bath. Oh, we had two baths in that house; one upstairs and one down, so it wasn't too bad.
SR: Oh.
SC: In them days you walked out to Robin' Park, you didn't ..., they had no bike, no nothing
SR: Now, what did you like about the football games?
SC: Well, we liked seein' Nanaimo winnin', of course.
SR: Who would they play?
SR: About how long did you stay at Number 8?
SC: Oh, I guess, it lasted three years. No more than three years.
SR: And it peetred out and that's why you moved?
SC: Ya.
SR: Now, how about White Rapid? You were quite far up in the mountains in that one too, compared to the early mine? Could you tell me anything about White Rapids. Working in it and how conditions were like or anything that happened while you were there?
SC: Well, it wasn't a very good mine to work in. Not in White Rapids. I had to drive that stroke, me and the guy, Nick, he is dead now and Tony Gaver and Dominic Pavasetto. There was three shifts on it. So, after we got the stroke drilled and it was all solid rock. I figured how to drive that stroke and then we got on the coal, you see.
SR: You were drilling and blasting it all the way down?
SC: All the way down.
SR: How deep was the slope?
SC: Oh, it wasn't too far. I just forget how long that slope was, but it was kind of steep too, it was like that. You walked up...
SR: Very steep to walk up...
SC: Ya.
SR. But not like Number 8. Number 8 was the worse I 've ever seen.
SR: For steepness.
SC: Right. Oh, it was like that.
SR: Very high.
SC: Well, Number 8 was so bad that my partner and I had to go out every Sunday and clean up the coal off and load sometimes as much as twelve cars of coal of that...
SR: So it had to be dropped...
SC: Dropped off the coal cars.
SC: The guys was loadin' 'em too big and the coal was just rollin' off.
SR: So, you spent some of your Sundays doing that?
SC: We spent almost every Sunday for quite a while.
SR: How did you do that with the... Did you get a day off for doing it for doing that or did you just go back...
SC: Well, my partner had a car. We went in his car on a Sunday,
SR: And the company knew you were doing this and they were paying you...
SC: Oh, they ask us to do this, sure. Oh, sure.
SR: This was not something you did extra, it was just part of your job?
SC: Well, it was extra, but if we didn't want to go, we didn't have to go.
SR: So, anyone could take your place on a Sunday? That's what I meant. You were not under contract to do it?
SC: No, but the boss wanted us to do it, so we'd done it.
SR: Do you remember any of your bosses?
SC: Oh, sure. I remember Dave Brown in Number 1, Tom Jackson in Number 1, Ted Courtney in Protection, in Number 8.
SR: Were these the mine managers or the...
SC: Ya.
SR: The mine mine managers.
SC: he was the pit boss, so like a foreman under the manager... I remember him. Which mine?
SR: Which mine?
SC: He was at Number 8. And he was at Northfield. And Jack Brown, well he was a pit boss too.
SR: Does anything stand out in your mind about management and labour
as far as your bosses go?
SC: Oh, no, they were all right.
SR: They were all good managers.
SC: Oh, sure. (chuckle) They knew, they couldn't bug the union anyway.
SR: Tell me about the union. How did you start as a union member? Did some one come and ask you to join the union?
SC: Oh, yes.
SR: Ya. How did that work?
SC: Oh, they 'ld come around your hose and say, "We are startin' a union up, you want to join?"
SR: How would come? Would it be a member of the executive. Who would it be?
SC: Ya.
SR: Anyone from the executive stand?
And what happened then? Did they give you a card or how did it work?
SC: I think they did give us card but I'm not sure now. Or yo u 'r just a member anyway. They knew you was in good standing anyway.
SR: So, then what happened? Were you told about meetings?
SC: Oh, sure. Oh, you know, when there was gonna be a meetin',
SR: Where would you meet?
SC: Actually, when the union was formed, we used to have a meetin's in the light hall, that's where that Disco is at now.
SR: Oh, ya.
SC: You know, upstairs. there.
SR: Tipoli.
SC: Ya..
SR: And it was an old building on that site then?
About how many would go to the meeting? And what year would that be?
When you first started to go to meetings?
SC: Oh, I forget now.. That's quite a while ago. It was a modern building, though
SR: In those days, aha. It might be the same building that is there now, then.
SC: It is. Oh, sure, it is the same building. ya.
SR: And this would be in the 20ies?
SC: I guess, it would be the late 20ies or early 30ies, I guess, I early 30ies, I think.
SR: I see. Ya. Can you recall any of the meetings themselves.
SC: Oh, sure. (chuckle) Well, somebody would get up and say something or somebody else would get up and said what was wrong or something. Oh, we had some good beatin's.
SR: Lively meetings?
SC: Oh, sure.
SR: How about your union presidents, Do you remember any of the union presidents?
SC: Ed Boyd. Ed Boyd, I remember more than anything. He went to Calgary from here, but he is dead now. He died of cancer, I think, oh, quite a few years ago now. And there was Percy Lawson, but he was secretary, Percy Lawson. He is dead now too. Ed Webb, he is also dead. Just the three, I remember.
SR: Do you remember Joe Sutton?
SC: Well, Joe never was president of the United mine workers.
SR: Oh, humhum. Now, how was it to go to the meetings. You enjoyed them and were they held in the evening after your work or when.
SC: Oh, there was held on the weekend.
SR: Saturday, was it?
SC: Mostly Sunday.
SR: Sunday.
SC: Mostly Sunday, ya.
SR: And you went quite regularly to them?
SC: I didn't go to them at all. Nobody else did either.
SR: Just the ones that you could go to.
SC: Ya. If it was an important meetin' we would go.
And when there was nothin' we didn't bother. But we alsways had a pretty good crowd.
SR: And was that every Saturday?
SC: Not every Saturday, No. Every two weeks or every four weeks, I forget now.
SR: Once or twice a month when you had to had....
SC: Ya.
SR: Humhuh.

SC: Or they had special meetin's. That... you know.

SR: Do you remember any real strong disagreements about something then wages or working conditions or anything like that that were brought out. Something that was brought up in the meetings that sticks to your mind

SC: No. I can't think of anything.

SR: What about labour difficulties and strikes? Were you in on any strikes at all?

SC: One or two, I think. But not very long.

SR: Short. Not a year or anything.

SC: Oh, no, no, no.

SR: You can't remember which mine that was at the time? Do you remember?

SC: Well, when one was off there was all off.

SR: And that is every mine in Nanaimo? Was it?

SC: Ya.

SR: Now, we are down to White Rapid mine. Did it peeter out also?

SC: Ya.

SR: This is your last mine on the list, Can you remember what year that was?

SC: That was 46, I think.

SR: About 1946. So, you worked quite a while at White Rapid's, did you?

SC: Quite a while.

SR: How many years?

SC: From the beginnin' to the end.

SR: From the very beginnings of White Rapids?

SC: I told ya, we drove the stroke down. So, I was there right to the end.

SR: And you weren't injured or anything there?

SC: No, no.

SR: So, that was a fairly good job.

Now, as far as production goes and things like that, was White Rapid a pretty good producer while you were there.
SC: No, no.
SR: It wasn't.
SC: No. The coal was too low.
I tell you, it was 20 inches and two feet.
SR: Humhum. So, that area wasn't as good as some of the others?
Like Number 8?
SC: Number 8 was the best mine I ever worked in. The very best.
SR: And when you were at Number 1, way back at Number 1, the second mine
you worked at, was the production good there at that time?
SC: Oh, ya. Two-thousand ton a day.
SR: Very good. Now, what it is you remember most about your mining days?
What sticks out in your mind the most. What you did and how you did it or?
SC: I guess, I liked Number 8 mine better than any other mine I ever worked in.
SR: What would you say caused you to like it. Was it the working conditions?
SC: Ya.
SR: And the coal was good too.
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: Now, out of the managers that you mentioned, was there any that you got to
know real well?
SC: Well, I know 'em all pretty good. Arthur Newberry. knew him just like, ...
like my own brother.
SR: Where was he?
SC: Number 8.
SR: Now, did he live near you or anything like this.
SC: Oh, no. He lived up on Milton Street.
He is dead now quite a few years too.
SR: Do you remember at all what year it could that you knew him?
SC: Oh, I forget now. I forget when Number 8 opened to tell you the truth,
SR: Mr. Newberry, what did you do together to get to know him. I mean, was
there certain things you always went to him for or what happened?
How did you get to know him?
SC: Oh, I guess, we got along good together, that's all. And... he was a good
boss. He was good to me anyway.
SR: So, how was he better than the others that you knew?
SC: Well, I guess, he treated me better, I don't know.
SR: Ya. Something like that.
SC: Ya.
SR: Well, in your experience then, he was about the best boss you had out of a whole string you mentioned.
SC: Oh, there was other good ones too, Oh, ya.
SR: Is there any particular thing you ever did other then mining with them or was it just mining that you saw them at?
SC: That was all?
SR: Did they go to the football games or did you see them anywhere else in town? Or anything like that?
SC: No, they never went to a bar or anything, you know.
SR: No. Aha. Most of the miners did go to the bars and do you remember any of the old ones in Southend that were popular in the early days?
SC: Oh, the Columbus was always popular.
SR: Humhum.
SC: And the Patricia. But the Columbus more so. More miners went there, I think than to Patricia.
SR: Ya. It's still a popular place for people to stop. Haliburton Street was one of the main streets then, was it? More so than Nicol?
SC: At that time, ya.
SR: It was the main street. In Southend,
SC: Well, they were both pretty even.
SR: Now, in the early 1917, so have got your first date here for starting in Harewood, what would you see passing up and down what it be a lot of the old type of cars. Or were there still horse and buggies left, or what happened? What was the transportation pattern like?
SC: Well, cars were just coming in in that time. So, there is more horses and buggies than cars. But then the cars started to gettin' more and more all the time, you know. But people all had Fords 'them days.
SR: All, Humhum. Can you remember - as far as the horse and buggies go, there was always some place to tie them in front of the old hotels, was there?
SC: Oh, sure.
SR: Did you have anything like a horse and buggy to travel in in your days?
SC: No, no. No. Nothing like that. (chuckle)
SR: You lived in Southend, so you did most of it on foot?
SC: Oh, sure. Well, how far is it from Haliburton Street to downtown?
SR: It wasn't any distance at all?
SC: Five, ten, minutes.
SR: humhum. Were the sidewalks paved in 1917?
SC: Ya. I guess, they were, ya. I think so.
SR: Right downtown then was paved?
SC: I'm not sure now, but I think so. But I remember the old wooden side walks downtown.
SR: Oh, when you were little?
SC: Ya. nd mud on Commercial Street was that deep.
SR: That's one foot deep. (laughter)
SC: Yes.
SR: And that was mostly from the wagon trucks?
SC: Well, the weather and that just made it mud.
SR: Just a mud hole.
SC: Ya.
SR: No place to drain much. Ya.
Now, there was an inlet that had been filled in, that has been filled in running around the whole back of the town and out by the arena. Was there a bridge there then.
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: So you went over a wooden bridge?
SC: You know where the Jean Burns Store is?
SR: Yes. I do.
SC: The bridge was on that corner. The bridge went across from what they called the Green at that time. Of course, there is now Safeway and Simpson Sears.
SR: So, on that corner, you went across to your sports ground, was it?
SC: Ya. No, no the sports ground is Robin's Park and Caledonia Park.
SR: What would you call the Green then?
SC: There were just the Green, that was all. They had picnics in there.
SR: Oh, was that the kind of park. I see. So, that is the area where Simpson Sears and Safeway is now. How did you get down the main street of town?
Did the bridge go to that too? Commercial Street?

SC: Well, you just walked downtown then when you got to the bridge and you wanted to go to the Green you'd just go over the bridge. It was only a bridge, oh, that wide, I guess.

SR: A foot bridge.

SC: Just a walk ... Ya.

SR: Well, were buggies allowed on the main street then?

SC: Oh, sure.

SR: How would you get your buggy across?

SC: Oh, you wouldn't. You had to leave the buggy and walk across.


Now, there was no bridge where the Bastion Street Bridge is now?

SC: No.

SR: Nothing there. Just a big ravine there.

Do you remember seeing the old Chinatown?

SC: Oh, sure.

SR: That was on your area. Not too far away, Could you describe it?

SC: Well, just like a bunch of broken down shacks, really. At the time you're talkin' about.

SR: 1917.

SC: Ya.

SR: And wooden side walks and the buildings together.

SC: Ya.

SR: And it burned down? Eventually. Do you remember any of Nanaimo's old fires? Anything that burned down in your area and any year that it burned down. Or how the fire hall run?

SC: No. I don't remember of any big fire downtown. Or do I? I can't think of any real big fires.

SR: Now, what did you do for your entertainment after you went and saw the football games in Robin's Park or anywhere that you wanted to go? What did you do for your entertainment? Did you go for dances?

SC: I went to some dances, but I was never a great dancer. My wife was, but I wasn't. We generally went to the beer parlour.
SR: To the Commerce, was that your ...
SC: Oh, downtown. Queen's.
SC: Ya.
SR: And what about your mining friends. Did they usually go to the same places or anywhere ...
SC: Oh, sure. Once we would get together.
SR: You would meet them. That's what I meant. And have a pretty good Saturday night, say. What did they use for electricity then. Was the town wired for all the beer parlours --- were lit by ele-tric lights?
SC: Oh, ya. By the times, I'm talking about. Ya, sure.
SR: What did you do in your own home? Did you have electricity in your home?
SC: Oh, ya.
SR: And you were on a water system? ... In Southend?
SC: Oh, ya. We had water the same as we have now.
SR: So, you had pretty well everything that the people in the country then had?
SC: Yes. Oh, sure, we had no trouble,
SR: Now, as far as movies and theatres and entertainment and things like this are concerned, did you ever go to anything like that in those days?
SC: Well, there used to be at that time and then they changed it to the Strand, that's right by --- next to Fletcher's.
SR: Ya. Where Fletcher's is now.
SC: And then they had the Capitol which have torn down two or three years ago.
SR: Can you remember any entertainers that you ever saw there?
SC: No. Life, you mean?
SR: Ya. Did anyone come and, say, make political speeches or anything there?
SC: Not that I know of. I wasn't interested in politics anyway.
SR: You wasn't interested in politics.
SC: No.
SR: How about, when you went to vote. Did you vote at all in the elections in those days?
SC: I don't think, I bothered. I do now, of course.
SR: You didn't bother. Aha.
SC: I do now, of course. But them days, I never bothered.

SR: Did you ever remember Nanaimo being visited by any dignitary? That came here from other places? Oh, say, any big from the federal government or anybody that came out to look into the mines or anything like this?

SC: No, I don't remember. I know the Queen came here at one time. What year was that?

SR: That was actually who is now the Queen mother. Is, this Queen.

SC: No, this Queen.

SR: This one. Elizabeth, ya. Now, how long did your father live? He was a miner as well as you. Did he have any accidents in the mines or anything?

SC: No.

SR: He didn't. He was pretty good. Did he continue mining or did he go on to some other job?

SC: Well, he was a preacher.

SR: Was he?

SC: Very religious. And he travelled the world. He belonged to the Plymouth Brethren. And he travelled in the old country, was in the States, Australia, well he went all over, and took Mom with 'em. They travelled all over.

SR: Well, when he was here with you, your growing-up years, you stayed in Nanaimo in your growing-up years from when you where two (years) on-your father didn't travel during that time?

SC: Oh, not to that time, no. After he finished mining.

SR: Oh, that's when he went into religion.

SC: What church was that? What nomination was it?

SR: It was Brethren.

SC: That is like a Protestant.

SR: A Protestant group.

SC: And was it...

SR: But they didn't call it Protestant. They just called it Brethren Brothers.

SC: Do you remember anything about. Did they have a church here in Nanaimo?
SR: Where was it?
SC: On Victoria Road. The end of Victoria Road. It's a house now.
And I had to go to Sunday school and I had to go to church when there was one on. Then, when I got to certain age, I says, "I'm not goin' back nomore."
I told my mother, I says, "no", I says, "that's the last. I'm not believin' in it and I'm not goin'." She says, "o.k. son, that's up to you."
SR: That was great.
SC: So, your mother gave the freedom to do what you wanted.
SC: Absolutely.
SR: How did your father feel about it?
SC: He didn't like it, but he didn't say anything.
SR: Didn't say anything. What about your other brothers? Did any of them follow their father's footsteps?
SC: Not one.
SR: Did he leave Nanaimo then after a while?
SC: My dad?
SC: No, no. He died here. He married a second time, then he died.
SR: I see, Well, when did he do his travelling?
SC: Oh, anytime. Didn't matter, what time of the year?
SR: So, it was from here that he went to other places?
SC: Ya. Oh, he always kept his home here, ya.
SR: So, how long would he be away?
SC: Oh, sometimes two or three months at a time.
SR: How did he get his calling? What made him get into this group. Going from mining into ministry?
SC: Well, he always was interested. But he never had no papers and that to say that he was a minister or anything like that.
SR: Do you remember any of the other churches? Old church sites in Nanaimo.
SC: There was that one on Victoria Road. They called that the "open meetin'." That was in oppositon to the Plymouth Brëthren, if you get what I mean?
SR: Oh, I see. That is a different Victoria Road church.
SC: Ya.
SR: And this is ... this one was where?
SC: The Brethren Brothers?
SR: Well, at the end.
SC: And this one is by Milton Street., what they called the 'open meetin'.' I don't know what's in there now.
SR: But 's still a church, is it?
SC: No, I don't think so.
SR: There is one on the corner of Milton, ya.
SC: But I don't think it's a church, is it?
SR: There is one on the corner of Milton and Victoria Road, but there was an Evangelistic center further down where the ... there is a disco place in there now; Sebastion's.
SC: Well, they are over there now.
SR: Yes. Just straight here.
SC: Pentecostal. That is over there.
SR: Was that the 'open church' you meant?
SC: No, no, no.
SR: It was a different one.
SC: No, they didn't have a minister either. Anybody... you could get up and preach or I could get up and preach.
SR: It sounds evangelistic or pentecostal of some kind. How was your fahter's church different then. You said it was more or less a closed meeting. They had ... your fahter was an ordained preacher in there, was he?
SC: No, no. no.
SR: He didn't become one?
SC: Never did, no. He was just interested in that and he was religious and so was mom and that was it. And they got their friends together and that is where they went. How many was in it, I couldn' tell ya. But it wasn't a big church or anything like that. It wasn't a schurch really. (chuckle) It was just a meetin' room.
SR: I haven't heard of that order before.
SC: Plymouth Brethren?
SR: No.
SC: Well, you could have had .......
SR: Ya. it sounds like something that came over on the Mayflag. (laughter) Maybe some of the old Quaker or something like this. If he wasn't a minister, was he ... they were just lay people then that took the service.
SC: That's all.
SR: Now, how long did this church last?
SC: Oh, for a long, long time.
SR: You can't remember it being torn down, can you?
SC: I tell you, it's a house there now.
SR: It's still a house, oh.
SC: Ya. You would never know what it used to be.
SR: I can't figure what denomination that is and whether or not...
SC: There is no denominination. No, there is no denomination at all.
SR: Is there anything else you can remember that sticks out about Nanaimo, say, the view of the harbour, or anything from your early days from when you were little that you could possibly remember?
SC: No.
SR: Say, how different it was then.
SC: The harbour was just there and that was it.
SR: Ya. It didn't have the amount of fill that it has now. It was a different shoreline.
SC: Oh, no. You know where the Explanade is at?
SR: Yes. Hymhum.
SC: Where CHUB radio station is?
SR: Yes, I do.
SC: Well, my parents had a house next door. Big two storey house. And down on the waterfront, the water came almost up to Explanade.
SR: So, that was the shoreline?
SC: Ya. And that is all filled in.
SR: Did you ever go to the ocean when you were a kid and throw rocks into ... 
SC: Oh, sure. I thought, it was handy. It wasn't far away.
SR: Now, what about fishing and that. Did any of you go fishing on your days off?
SC: No, we wasn't interested. Not my brother or me, none of us.
SR: Was there a fishing fleet here at that time?
SC: Oh, I guess, it would be, but not like it is today.
SR: And it didn't go into the inner harbour, where it does now?
SC: No. Not that I know of, no.
SR: And, did you ever go for picnics or anything on Newcastle?
SC: Oh, miners' picnic, that was a big day (emphasis)
SR: Mmm. Tell me about that. That's great.
SC: Well, it was in the summer time, of course, and my mother used to have a clothes basket about that big while there was ten of us. So, that thing was loaded...
SR: With food.
SR: With food. (chuckle)
SC: Well, we was over there all day, you see.
SR: And was there a dance there at night?
SC: I don't think so, at that time. I don't remember I dance being there, no.
SR: What did you do at the picnic?
SC: Oh, you pitches horse shoes. I mean, us kids didn't. But the men pitched horse shoes and they played soft ball and they played foot ball, things like that. But, like I say, I was pretty young then and I didn't ... Well, we played "catch" and that but that is about it, you know.
SR: What did you like the best about Newcastle, all the food, and the fun? (laughter)
SC: Ya. Oh, we always looked forward to the food. That was for sure.
SR: And that was annual outing for the miners?
SC: Oh, every year.
SR: Every year. Ya. How did you all get over there and back? Did they have..
SC: We had the scow.
SR: The V2. Oh, I see.
SC: Ya. the V2 took us over and took the scow over And it was loaded, just loaded, because everybody had big families in them days, you know. And they had to have lots of food..
SR: I see. Now, when you went over there, you didn't actually run into any of the old mine shafts or sites that were on Newcastles? Did you?
SC: Oh, I knew, where it was at. We 'ld go down and look where it used to be. That was all covered over, you see.
SR: And this was when. What year are you talking about? 1917?
SC: Oh, no, it was after that.
SR: Well, was is the earliest miners' picnic you can remember. Was it when you were little?
SC: Ya. I wasn't very old. I don't think. I know, I had to pack the basket. So, I wasn't very old.