Where were you born? Auchinleck, Scotland. My father had been out here a couple of times when we came out. We came out in 1909. We arrived in Nanaimo on the 5th of October, 1909. That's the day o' the big explosion in Extension. I was born in 1900. All I remember about the ye I heard what they said, explosion is what, that's all. I didn't go to school in Nanaimo. I know we lived in Nanaimo till after Christmas, then we moved to South Wellington. I never had no education there, ye know. I was settin' in a school class there wi' young men and women. I had all my education in Scotland. I had no education here. I went till I was nine years old.

I went to the selee-at and I quit. I says to heck with it. The bloomin' haywire teachers -- see what I could do in a few minutes. They sit there. These young men and women were strugglin' there to get their bloomin' lesson done. Yeah. So my younger brothers, they went to Extension school. They learned more, ye see, they got better than we did. Me and Bob we knew we were finishin'. All the education we got was in the old country.

We lived on Wallace Street. The corner o' Wallace Street. H. & W Butcher store is there now, in front of it. The house is still there. The Farmers' Co-op was farther up the street.

There used to be Street, where the old Shamrock Stables was, it used to be in there.

My father was a miner. When we got here he was finished minin'. We moved out to China Ranch (Cinnabar now). We had 160 acres. We just leased it. We had over thirty head of cattle. And we had over a dozen horses. It was all horses in them days, no cars.

My job as a boy was runnin' the milk wagon to Nanaimo. 12 years old. (laugh). We started in at Haliburton Street, that's where Woodhouse, that's the first house, then it up Nichol street, u the different streets, went back down again, and the old horse used to know where to go. Just used to -- long lines, used to say "Go ahead!" and it would take off. And it knew the short cut, and it was waitin' on me!

My father stopped me goin' down Fraser Street. Don't go down there, he says. That's where Fraser Street was, down the hill, called it the ravine in them days. Down in back of what's Terminal Avenue now. That's the best customers I got, I told him. Some of those religious outfit told him where I delivered milk, ye see.
Where it branches down there. Terminal Avenue, that was all Fraser Street in them days. That was **xx** called the ravine in them days. They filled it up. That's where Fraser Street was, down the hill by what's Terminal Avenue now.

Did your father know you were delivering milk there?

He stopped me! (laugh). Don't go down there, he says. I says they're the best customers I got.

Who lived down there?

One old nigger woman called Jennie Shenky (?) and a bunch of girls there. Different ones, you know. I forget their names now. I knew in them days. **xx** I'd get down there about 11 o'clock in the morning. I'd cut off past the cemetery, get through the Five Acres, and head for home. But I kinda 'd take my time, because if I got home I had to go to work again. After washin' up those dishes and milk cans, get down there and do some weedin". So I thought to hell with it! (laughter).

So what time would you get home from your deliver?

About one o'clock.

How many customers did you have?

About 100, I guess.

My brothers were supposed to spell me off, but they wouldn't do it.

Seven days a week, you know, it was too much. I went down to Sou' Wellin'ton first, and got a job there. --I was up to my knees in mud. (Half way down the slope). That's what the men were drowned in.

Oh to hell with this. Oh there was 38 men drowned. 1914-1915.

And it was still mud? --Oh yes, it took months to pump it out.

I remember. They built that PTA hall out here, the community hall. right beside the railroad track.

And the night before, all these guys from South Wellinton come out to hold a concert. They all got drowned next day. Yes. They was good musicians, good singers. They were all miners then? They was
mostly Scotchmen, one or two Welshmen. Mostly Newcastle and Scotchmen. All on the same shift. My wife she used to give me all the news, you know. She was right here.

You were still living on the ranch when the 1912 strike took place? Did you take milk up to the strikers then, eh? --Strikers and scabs both (laugh).

Well how did you feel?

I just heard all their yarns. It went in one ear and out the other, yes. I was 12 years old. Then Jack Neen, he was chief of police. He says to my father, How old is that boy? He's twelve. You're supposed to be fourteen before you can drive a horse in the city. Forget it, he says, I'll keep my eye on him.

It was City Police.

What happened the day they burned some houses at Extension?

Well that was when they brought the military in -- Bowers's Seventy Twa. They come with shot and shell, to blow us all the way to hell.

They sang that all the time wherever they went.

That was the worst riot at Extension. The houses went on fire, the shingles was comin' down there, pret'near a whole right through the wasteland (?)

shingle, on fire, when they get up in the air they fly for miles./ The whole family was out all night, watchin' the hay didn't catch fire.

How many houses do you think they burned? Oh, about a dozen, I guess. The burnin' houses was all scabs. They didn't burn any union houses. They cleaned out lots o' stuff up there before they burned 'em. --What did they do with it? --They put it in their houses. The union men got brains, you know, they know what they're doin'.
Somebody saw me, they had a full bed, in the bush there. An Scotchman. He says Hows your people fixed for beds? Oh I says we got lots of beds. He says Come and have a look at this one. It was one o' them fancy beds, big headboard, everything else. (laughter).

How did your family feel about it? --My old man was a union man, but he kep' away from it. There was one or two union men and the rest were all scabs, and the union men got tired of that god dam church, said to hell with it. (The Brethren church)

It split up families, didn't it? --Certainly. I know families never spoke to each other again. Some was union men and some was scabs. Never spoke again. Oh, they'd live in the same house, but they'd never speak again. They got married again some of them, and moved out. Left the scabs there. --And did they all work together afterw'ards? Oh yes, but ye didn't mix with any of them.

It went up again after the strike. It was 1928 it went haywire. What caused that? --No sales. They was usin' oil, you see.

I know at Ladysmith a special boat come in, you know, and there was no coal. Oh, they would go to Nanaimo to load coal. They had good coal.

Did you work in the mine? Sure I did! What were you doing? I was a mule skinner. (chuckle). How did you like working with mules? Okay. I could handle mules. If anybody had mules to handle, they'd come to me. All them fire bosses knew I could handle mules. I remember one time I counted them, there was a hundred mules in the three mines. (Extension). After that it went down, ye see.
What did they do with the mules when they got old? They very seldom got old. Somebody killed them. --Did they treat them very cruelly? Some people did, yes. Somebody was saying they didn't have any skin on them. No! They used to take these six by sixes, they were stripped down, you see, and the miners would cut them slivers off, you couldn't blame the mule.

One day, that was in the twenties, Jimmie Strang was the manager, he says come on, we've got a job for you today. There was twenty mules there now. Tie them together and get them up on that bluff. You see, the government inspector was comin' to check on the mules. And he says, keep watchin' the office winda upstairs, and when you see me wavin' a white rag bring them down. Why did you have to take those twenty up? Oh, all raw! Some o' them no hair on 'em at all, just red flesh! So the inspector wouldn't seem them in the barn.

So they had a government inspector? Oh yes. They had regulations, I guess. I sat there for about four or five hours, I guess. & I kept mindin' that winda, then when I see this tablecloth or somethin' took off I untied 'em from this tree and took them back to the barn.

Did they make much noise? No, no. Did they kick a lot? They kicked a lot, all right.

Were there many Negros here then? Oh yes! Where did they come from? I bet there were fifty Negros in Ladysmith, anyway. They came from the States. Lots of them from Salt Spring.

Different Islands, you know. They bin in the mines, and they come to the mines again.
They were good miners, good workers too. Most of them lived in Ladysmith. Some of them lived in Extension. Up where you live, a Negro had that place one time. Colwell has that piece now. All log cabins in there. All "niggers. Mrs. Cassidy told my wife she used to walk up the Extension track there, to parties at that Negro's place there. Stovell. They used to have good parties, they last all night long, and walk back down the ties again. Old Tom's wife. That's how they named Cassidy at that station (?) Did Stovell's have a big house? Log cabin. A big log cabin, and the smaller ones. They had a good time on a Saturday night. That's all the entertainment they had. Some of them niggers was good musicians you see..

What was Extension like in those days? Oh lots of fun! There was Slav town and Italian town and Scotch town, all the different names Whatever nationality ye were. They mostly all stayed together, yeah. Chinatown was the main thing. They had streets, with stumps, oh boy, for stumps in there!

I remember one time when they built the wash house, and this old Billie Ball, he was a fire boss. So he wanted somebody to go in with him, so he says: Ye come out, we have to do something in the mine there, so I says okay, we took the car in there and we come out the same way. So we went down to the wash house, it was full o' women! First of all we seen a woman goin' out, and a woman goin' out. Some of them women were holdin' their heads goin' past me. Who were they? Housewives, Young women, with daughters in their family. They used to go down and have a shower. They thought the miners were all in the mine. (hearty laughter) That's one time they got fooled! That was when me and old Billie Ball was in the wash house.

I remember the Beban Mine up there. Johnnie Senini, he was in the mine. He was up to his neck in water. And there was some other guy that was with him and some other guy they couldn't get a chance
to drag him up on this little ledge. He was drowned. Johnnie walks out and the first thing he asked for was a shot of Scotch! He says Give me a shot of Scotch, he'd been up to his neck in water! What kind of a man was he? --Oh he was a good-natured guy, yes. And his brother Tony, he was the same. He was full of devilment, you know. No, Johnnie never married. Tony married Mrs. Armand. Salty is married to my niece. Tony was his father and Mrs. Armand was his mother.

Did you go to church when you were young? I was supposed to, but when I got old enough I said To hell with it! Why? Well, I got fed up with it! (laugh). Well, if you see that milk go sour, if you let it stand long enough it'll go sour. That's how it was wi' me. What did you believe in in life? I believed in enjoyin' my self. (laughter). Nobody will say anything against me in here. If I could help anyone I always helped 'em. That's my religion. Yes, well my mother and father were religious. My mother would drive you crazy by religion. You come in at night after doin' a hard day's work, you got down on ye're knees and you had a prayer, and they'd then read a chapter out the Bible, and there they were. When I grew up I said okay, that's all I want to hear now. They didn't bother me after that.

How come when your parents were religious, they were always on the side of the strikers? Oh yes, my father never said anything about the scabs. My father was a union man all his life. Oh yes, brothers were split. The almighty dollar was what they was thinkin' about. There was seven boys and one girl in the family. There's only two of us left now. Me and Jock, in Victoria. He's had some kind of a stroke, anyway.
How did you meet your wife?

Well, she had a flat tire, and I was going to a miners' meeting in Ladysmith. I knew who she was, she knew who I was, but we hadn't met. So I pulled up behind her and said Trouble eh? Flat tire. I had a pair of coveralls, I pulled them on, and got my tools out, jacked the wheel up, patched it up and took the spare out and fixed that one, it took about 20 minutes. Then she said There's a dance in Granby Saturday night, I said, I don't dance. So she says There's a good show in Nanaimo Saturday night. How about taking in a show? That was her last dance.


What special qualities does a man have to have to handle mules? He's got to have brains. (a laughter) I was paid digger's wages when I had to drive the mules.
My father was 6 ft. 2" in his stocking feet. Weighed over 200 pounds. When he died they had to send for a special coffin to Vancouver.

I lost a generation in the coal mines. They were younger than me. The real old timers, they knew me.

They used to play music for the coal miners. Oh yes. They were good musicians. Old Pete Conti... Down at the school house? We had to clean it up after we were finished. The women went down to clean it up.

My working days is over.

Was there a trap door in the Tunnel Hotel at Extension? In the beer parlor?

I was married down in the school (house?) in 1928. I am 50 years in this house.

Sandy McKay was stable boss at Extension.

The pusher (helper) got $2.75 a day. Gave the mule a hand. Put the block under the car. The mule wouldn't go any further.

I made bread. Punch the dough up for me. 10 big loaves. My mother was a good cook. Twice a week she made scones, oatcake. She was a real good cook.

This story about he was working, got cleaned up in the wash house. Was talking to my sister. I seen smoke. The whole bloody bush was on fire. I am needin' to lay down somewhere (sister was dying). I went down and packed her up and put her on the bed. We were married 3 months later.

The mines opened up in 1914. No. 2 Mine, 3 East. I opened it up and it was loaded -- cars sitting for all them years. Caved in.

Before I went to Extension I went for a job. I told them to milk their own dam cows. You are not old enough to look for a job. Employer (?) said He is old enough (wink).

He moved me down to this mud up to your knees. Your job on that hoist. You had to be on your knees in water. Sometimes a man would be working on your knees 3 ft. high and you dug coal down level.

Mother would say Get up and go to work. Shifts, 3 shifts. 6 days a week. I was a driver of the pit. I used to work Sundays. $3 a day. That's all you got.

180 acres in China Farm (?) Cows - we started with a handful, and then we had 20 or 30 of them. Milked and delivered milk. Learned a lot about Nanaimo. They were awful religious, my people.

My father came over here in 1904. The next year they went back. They came back to Nanaimo. Fed up when you are away all the time. We arrived here in 1909.

I was born in 1900. There was 5 of us. I was the middle one. I was the one that gave her the trouble.
Anderson. Lives on the overpass at Chase River. He had a big double bed. Do you need a bed? It was hidden in the bush. No, I don't need a bed. They took all the furniture out of the houses before they burned it.

My father kept out of this. All my brothers stayed on the union side. Bob and Jim were working there but not at the time of the strike because they would not work at the time of the strike.

Old Cunningham was head of the sup't.(?)

The guys were starving, and they joined the army to get a meal ticket.

I remember one February day when the sun was shining, how I hated to go down the mine when the sun was shining like that!

MB: What is the difference between coal and rock?

DA: Coal is light. Rock is heavy. They call rock nigger heads.