William Barraclough
... [beach near] the Harper Hotel. The Indians and their dogs must have been visiting here from some place to the north, where the last remnants of these animals were in existence.

Victor Harrison
I remember seeing these dogs, two of them, or perhaps even three, in some Indian canoes that were at Departure Bay. And these Indians had been fishing, I understood, at the Nass River. And their homes, I believe, or headquarters was on Hope Island, which lies off the easterly coast, north-easterly coast of this Vancouver Island.

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, you speak of seeing the Indian longhouse at Departure Bay. Could you give us a few more particulars of it?

Victor Harrison
Yes, I remember the longhouse very well. It was on that land, or beach behind the old Harper Saloon at Departure Bay. It now is the property that would join the old powder works property. This was a longhouse, not high, one storey, built of big cedar logs, with long, cedar splits on the roof. And the door particularly took my attention. The door was not a door as we know them today, the door was an opening, a low opening. And you couldn't walk upright into that opening to get into the house. The [inaudible] house.

And smoke would, they had the fire in there, it came right in the room, as I remember it. And the fire didn't [go up] the stack, they let the smoke out of the roof, was made of cedar splits, put up on end. Up in the roof, up top.

William Barraclough
While living as a young man at Departure Bay, you must of been acquainted and seen James Dunsmuir, quite often.

Victor Harrison
Yes, I remember Mr. James Dunsmuir. He was over at our house one time, and so were some of his family at various times. Of course Departure Bay then was a very busy place to what it is now. I would say that it did as much or more shipping than Nanaimo harbour. There was many ships calling in there. There was the Wellington, the Costa Rica, and the Glory of the Seas, a sailing ship. And there was three or four, or there were really four wharves there. They're all gone now. And the head man for the Dunsmuir
interest at that place was Mr. Charles Newton Young. He'd been an English school teacher at one time, and he was married to, he lived there with his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Young. She'd also been an English school teacher. They had a son, Allan Young, and he died and was buried in Nanaimo cemetery, in the northeast corner of the cemetery, right against the sidewalk.

William Barraclough
That'll be the Wallace Street cemetery.

Victor Harrison
That is, the cemetery I'm thinking of now is on Wallace, the corner of Wallace Street and Comox Road.

William Barraclough
Yes.

Victor Harrison
The old cemetery. And the headstone was there only within a few years ago. I drew several people's attention to it, because they were trying to get the stones together in some sort of a formation. And that headstone was still there, and I took Mrs. Hope, Elizabeth, Bessie Hope, she was Bessie Dunsmuir formerly, she's now departed this life, to show her the headstone. They were very friendly with the Youngs. And she saw the headstone, and she read it, and she remembered Allan very well, the boy. And I don't know where that stone is. I don't know what became of it when they altered the cemetery, and piled the stones into sort of a semi-circular formation. It was at the end of the formation when I saw it there, and was cemented in, but it's gone now. I don't know where it is.

William Barraclough
Then Mrs. Young and her son are buried in that cemetery.

Victor Harrison
Mrs. Young and her son were buried in the cemetery, yes.

William Barraclough
And Mr. Young was buried...

Victor Harrison
He was buried in Duncan, he died years afterwards in Duncan.

And the shipping in Departure Bay was very interesting. It gave promise of being a better port than Nanaimo, but of course it didn't materialize. I remember one time, a seven-masted schooner took on coal at what is called Pimbury Point, now they call it Brechin Point. That was owned by the Chandler interest, American interest, who got their coal on land which belongs to the estate of the Westwood family, years after that Brechin mine
There was remnants at that time of the original mining inhabitants on Newcastle Island, where there was quite a building and a mining shaft.

William Barraclough
The home that James Dunsmuir had at Departure Bay?

Victor Harrison
Yes, I remember it very well, I lived there for some years. It was a very fine place, and very unfortunately, it was taken down and destroyed by subsequent owners. And it was quite a historic place. It should have really been kept as historic grounds for some historic purposes, I think.

William Barraclough
Now, when you first started to take up the law profession, you were articled with Jackson, Drake, and Helmcken of Victoria.

Victor Harrison
Yes, Drake, Jackson, Helmcken had an office on the corner of Bastion and Langley Streets in the city of Victoria. Today, it's a part of the Bank of Montreal. I believe they bought the property and joined it on. Crease and Company lawyers are upstairs.

William Barraclough
And then you moved to Ladysmith and opened an office of your own?

Victor Harrison
Yes, I did.

William Barraclough
And you became magistrate there.

Victor Harrison
Yes, I did.

William Barraclough
What years were that?

Victor Harrison
Well, I must have opened up around 1909, or '10.

William Barraclough
In 1911, you moved to Nanaimo and opened an office on Bastion Street, now part of the Commercial Hotel. Then moved to a ground floor office on Church Street, which was adjoining the old Canadian Bank of Commerce building. You were elected as alderman
for the City of Nanaimo in 1922. And elected first as mayor in 1938, and subsequently served nine times as mayor of the City of Nanaimo.

Victor Harrison
And practicing there ever since. I retired some years ago, when I'd thought I'd take a rest.

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, some days ago I took you around the new driveway below the bowling green, and standing out from the rocky bank we saw a piece of railway steel, buried several feet. Can you recall the railway that ran along the waterfront?

Victor Harrison
When you first mentioned this to me I was thinking about the matter a great deal and I clearly remember when there was a mine in the Harewood ridges where they took out coal. And to get that coal down to the shipping point in Nanaimo harbour, they had an aerial tramway. This was a steel line, supported by a tripod timber, that is to say three timbers, like telephone poles for instance, joined together at the top and then planted in the ground. And the steel cable stretched from pole to, from one tripod to the other until it arrived down at the point where the coal was to be put in a bunker. I remember distinctly seeing that, the railway, aerial railway working on Harewood ridges.

And from there, I don't recall in town just where those poles were, but to ride down in what is now, on or about, what they call or refer to as Piper's Park [Piper Park]. And one time I was with my father, between this place they call Piper's Park and the main body of the shore, which is now filled in. It was not filled in then, it wasn't filled in years after. But only partially so. And I can distinctly remember the fill in there, and we were standing on the side of the fill in, and the trains were running out a trestle way, from the mines right through to get the coal, apparently down to the waterfront. It seemed to run, I cannot be sure, but it seemed to run on or about or in Piper's Park in some way. Which is hard for me to understand now, and they coupled the matter up in my mind when you showed me those rails in Piper's Park. So, just how that was, I do not know.

But in any event, as we were talking there, old Mr. Robins came along, he was the manager of the coal company. And he talked quite a while, I can remember that distinctly. And all what he said, I don't remember. But he and my father talked for some time. And he pointed his hand this way and that to what he was doing to get the coal down. And he didn't seem to hear very well. I remember him putting his hand to his ears and bending down sort of to catch what was being said.

William Barraclough
Mr. Robins appeared to be quite active around Nanaimo in various things.
Victor Harrison
Yes, I believe he was. He at that time was quite a man for promoting various social
activities. I believe he was the man, who really started the Boys’ Brigade as they call it. It
was connected with the St. Paul's Anglican Church. And there’s a number of old timers
still around Nanaimo who belonged to that brigade. I think Johnson would be one, and
the late Bob Gouge, who ran the Shades Saloon, as a boy belonged to that brigade, as I
recall.

The Rev. E.G. Cooper of the Anglican Church at Wellington had a Boys’ Brigade
there. They were very active. I think more so than the brigade in Nanaimo. The Rev.
Mr. Cooper was [unmarried] and lived with two elderly sisters at the vicarage in
Wellington. He was a tall, slim man, and had been a very good athlete in his day. He at
one time engaged the late Charles J. Trawford, at one time Canadian middle-weight
champion, and subsequently sheriff of the county of Nanaimo, to teach the boys
boxing. And on one occasion, the Rev. Trawford was sparring with one of his brigade
boys and was getting very rough, and knocked a boy out. The Reverend Mr. Cooper then
took on Charles J. Trawford for a few rounds with the gloves. The result of which was
that he knocked Charles J. Trawford out in the first round.

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, the town of Wellington was once a very busy place, have you any
recollections about that?

Victor Harrison
Yes, I remember Wellington very well. In fact, I really knew it as much, if not more than
Nanaimo. It was at those days, I did not live at Wellington, nor Nanaimo, I lived down
Departure Bay. But I do remember through going there various times, I remember going
up fishing at Long Lake there; we caught a lot of bullheads. And I remember seeing the
old wooden tracks still in the ground, as they were. When they could, the Dunsmuir
people had brought their coal from Wellington down to Departure Bay to load on the
wharves, their boats. Mr. John Marwick, who lived in Nanaimo at that time, was talking
to me about them one day, and I was telling him how I’d seen them in the woods, yes.

He said, "I can remember that very well, because I was the first man that drove a team
down and brought the wagons with coal up from the bay to be loaded again with
coal." And he said, "Finally, I left there and came to Nanaimo." Be surprised if the rails,
or the remnants of them, are still in the woods between the end of the Departure Bay
Road, just beyond the Clark Road, and the end of Long Lake, are still in the woods, out
where I saw them.

William Barraclough
Can you remember them bringing the first steam engines to bring coal down to Departure
Bay?
Victor Harrison
No, when I was there they had small locomotives that had come from England. And years afterwards, when I was living at Nanaimo and practicing law, I was down to South Wellington, and here was, I was talking to the engine driver, and I found that was the identical railroad, or locomotive, that had carried coal from Wellington to Departure Bay, to the mines from Wellington to the wharves in Departure Bay. It was still in service and still working at the mines in South Wellington.

William Barraclough
Well. Now, another man around town that was quite prominent: do you remember Mr. William Stewart?

Victor Harrison
Oh yes, I can just recall him. Seeing I don't remember much, he was a big man. I remember one 24th of May there was a lot of people out and he was firing some cannons at the old Bastion, just as salute.

William Barraclough
Stewart Avenue is named after him.

Victor Harrison
Yes, oh, I knew his son Bernie very well, for many years.

William Barraclough
Yes. There was always quite a show for 24th of May, and Mr. Stewart I understand was very prominent in that.

Victor Harrison
Oh yes, you'd generally see him there. A big man, I can remember that. I remember him standing by the cannons one time, he was among the crowd. He was supervising the firing of the cannons, as I understood it. And there's a little wharf, Johnson's wharf, down there, but as I say, I did live in Nanaimo, but not that particular time.

William Barraclough
No.

Mr. Harrison, I have been told that you were quite a hunter when you were a young man around Nanaimo. Have you got any little incidents that you could record for us?

Victor Harrison
Well, I have been hunting all my life, you might say. I can remember very well when [I was at] Departure Bay the first firearms that both myself and my brother, my late brother, had were flintlock guns. We each had one that were loaded down the barrel with a rod. And the gun was fired by the hammer of the gun, [which held?] a piece of flint. And this flint struck a flash and went through into the barrel and exploded the powder. And that way the gun fired. Of course, I was very young then, and we just had the guns because
they were given to us by a man called [Andeen]. And I remember one time hunting grouse with my father at Page's Lagoon, afterwards called Crow's Lagoon; old Bill Crow was there and his wife. She talked to us a lot, she had a dog that kept barking and she kept trying to keep it quiet. That Crow's Lagoon of course, is still there.

But that same Bill Crow was quite a character. He was a seaman. And I did not see much of him for many, many years, and afterwards, I was practicing law in Nanaimo, and I don't know what length of time had passed, probably over 20 years. And he was then one of the deputies, or assistants to Charles Trawford, who was the sheriff. And Bill Crow came in and wanted me to start a lawsuit, over his wife's will. And he insisted on me bringing this lawsuit against the late John Shore, and Mr. L. Davis, and I launched the lawsuit, and it was a very bitter lawsuit, and created an awful disturbance around town. And many people took strong sides in the matter. And it was tried by the late Chief Justice Aulay MacAulay Morrison in the Nanaimo courthouse. And the verdict was given by Morrison, in favour for, you might say, every claim that was made in the case in favour of old man Crow, old Bill Crow.

18:21

[recording stops and restarts]

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, we sincerely thank you for this interview. The information given is of historic interest and will become more valuable in the years to come.

On Tuesday, February the 8th, 1966, Mr. Harrison addressed the Nanaimo Historical Society, before 75 present. His subject: Brother XII of Cedar and De Courcy Island. A most fascinating subject, and he spoke without notes for over an hour. From information supplied by Mr. Harrison, and supplemented with items from the British Columbia Biography of 1914, Volume 3, page 578, here is a brief history of his family:

Grandfather Eli Harrison, born in Hurdsfield, Cheshire, England in 1822. Married Elizabeth Warburton November 2nd, 1847, a daughter of Thomas and Jane Warburton. Eli Harrison brought his young wife to America in 1850. In 1852, he was attracted to the California goldfields. Mr. and Mrs. Harrison set out across the plains from St. Louis, travelling with their own horses and cattle and wagons. Along the trail they met other caravans and had several experiences with the Indians, stories of their actions still being traditions of the Harrison family.

The party crossed from Mississippi River over the plains via Salt Lake, Utah, the [Sierra] Nevada Mountains to California. Arriving at San Francisco the 4th of July, 1853. This was during the stirring days of the vigilantes. English and French citizens honoured the victory of their allied forces in the Crimea.

In San Francisco food was scarce and gold was plentiful. The Harrisons left via ship for Victoria, arriving there the 18th of June 1858. They lived first in a tent as no housing was
available. The tent was set under large fir trees and beds were made from ferns and branches. A house was built later; lumber was $80 a thousand feet and all purchases were made from the Hudson's Bay stores. Government Street was a mass of wild roses.

Eli Harrison was for several years justice of the peace. He held the office of Grand Master for Masons for British Columbia from 1878 down to, including part of, 1881. He was the first principal of Columbia Royal Arch Chapter No. 120.

There were 11 children born the Harrisons and seven were living in 1914. Mr. Eli Harrison died at St. Joseph's Hospital, Victoria in 1907, aged 85.

21:40

While living in San Francisco, Mr. Eli Harrison became a confidant of the great Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Italian patriarch, who was living in exile there. When Garibaldi sailed for Italy to become an army officer in 1854, Mr. Harrison saw him off by ship. He received several letters from Garibaldi, inviting him to live in Italy, promising him wealth and good position. The letters were kept in the Harrison family for many years. But they're now lodged in the archives at Rome.

Eli Harrison, the second, practiced law in Victoria as Harrison and Pollard and became county court judge for the Cariboo and later for the county of Nanaimo. Eli Harrison had four sons who followed his profession as a lawyer. They were: Paul P. Harrison, he was appointed county court judge for Nanaimo; Claude, who served as mayor of Victoria; Victor B. of Nanaimo who served nine terms as mayor; and Herschel.

The Harrison family, making a great contribution to the legal profession of British Columbia.

23:10

[recording stops and restarts]

William Barraclough
We interviewed Mr. Victor B. Harrison on another occasion, where he is now confined to his home. His memory is remarkably clear. We are fortunate in securing on tape further reminiscences of former times of Nanaimo. His talk is continued here.

23:58

[recording stops and restarts]

William Barraclough
The subject of this tape recording by Mr. Victor B. Harrison concerns the old Hudson's Bay Company Bastion at Nanaimo. He was interviewed by William Barraclough at Mr. Harrison's residence - 215 Newcastle Avenue, Nanaimo. On Monday morning,
September the 16th, 1968. The background noises are caused by an old creaking rocking chair, in which Mr. Harrison was seated. Introducing Mr. Harrison.

Victor Harrison
You asked me about Mr. Tom Kitchin, the late real estate agent here, who was a very well-known citizen. I was very well acquainted with Mr. Kitchin, and did a considerable, quite a bit of legal business. And it seems that he made a lot of money in England, through a [corner] on the market, in dealing with hops. And he said he made what would be equivalent to a million dollars. And he turned this over, he said, to his son in trust, in some way, and he left England and ventured forth out into the world, he said, and wanted to see Canada, and wound up came to Nanaimo.

And he came up on the E&N railway train and he remembers the old hotel: the Occidental was there at the time he landed. It had been built by Mr. Fiddick, the original Mr. Fiddick. And so, as I say, Tom Kitchin, later on Mr. Albert Edward Planta was very friendly with Mr. Kitchin and Mr. Kitchin [reposed?] great faith in the abilities and integrity of Mr. Planta, and in some way, which he never explained in detail to me, the money would come from England through Mr. Planta, who incidentally secured a good-sized mortgage on his property. Then and now on Newcastle Avenue, corner of Newcastle and Mount Benson Street, if I remember right.

And one day, Mr. Kitchin was talking to me about the two old wooden houses, they were built in very early days, at the time they opened coal mining in Nanaimo. These two little, wooden houses still remained where they were built at the back of what is now known, what was then known as the Windsor Hotel, owned by Mr. Joe Fox. And Mr. Kitchin had an option on the old opera house, which also was close to the back of the little houses. And he complained to me that Joe Fox had contemplated building an addition to his hotel, and he did not want those houses touched, or taken down anyway, because of their historic interest. And he talked to me considerably about the matter; it was a matter of sentiment to old Tom Kitchin, because he thought they were valuable as an advertising feature to the city of Nanaimo.

And the upshot of all this talk was that Joe Fox insisted on having those little houses removed, or taken down because they were on, he said, on part of his property, and he wanted to build this extension to his hotel. And Tom Kitchin was very much upset about this and gave me instructions to start a law suit in the county court, to prevent the work going on. That is to say the work of removing these two small, wooden houses. These houses were made of square timbers, cut by, hewn by axe from the trees. There was no saw lumber in them that I could see. And one of the houses had been rented by Tom Kitchin for some years, for a very small rental, to Mr. Al Davis, the cigar maker.

Al Davis told me the house was very tight and the roof was in good shape, and there was nothing the matter with the place. However, as the work fitting to go on, and did go on, for removing the house, I brought an action in the county court, and it was tried before the late Judge Barker. And after considerable evidence, and talking about the matter, the judge said he didn't think he'd issue an injunction, he said. Joe Fox thought he'd had the
first rights to remove an old building that was in his way, or something to that effect, I just forget. However, the entire record of that is in the courthouse, or should be there still.

And while this discussion went on in regard to these two houses, which were built by the early settlers, he discussed the old Bastion, the Bastion built in 1853. It was the old Hudson's Bay fort, built by the two fort builders of the Hudson's Bay Company, to protect the coal miners and others who worked in the mines, the coal mines, which had then been discovered. History shows this. That is to say history that shows why the fort was built: to protect the workers in the mines.

29:40

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, could I just ask a question? Those two little, log cottages you referred to, would they be the ones that were built by the Muirs do you suppose?

Victor Harrison
The Muirs?

William Barraclough
They built the first two cottages in Nanaimo.

Victor Harrison
Well, I talked to Joe Muir about it considerably and I think that was the, I believe it was built by or for the Muirs. I think they lived there first. I think he told me that in the story, building up the evidence.

So then Tom Kitchin's now talking about the Bastion [all of a sudden?]. He said this Bastion, down there on the corner, he said, which was moved down there some years ago, he said, when old Davidson, when Mr. Davidson was mayor of the city, he said. I can remember that well, I can't just remember the date. But, he struck it somewhere about the year 1897. Which was correct enough, because the old contract for moving the Bastion, made with Mr. Coulson, a contractor, is still in the records of the Bastion, and a memorandum of it is in the files in the Land Registry office in Victoria, with the title of the Bastion. I know that because I filed it there on one occasion.

So to continue the story about the Bastion being on his property. He said, "This old Bastion," he said, "was up here on my property. It was here for some years, I think about six or seven years or more, and I was getting afraid they would claim the land," he said. "I have this land, I held it under option. I had it then, and I have it now," he said.

So he said, "I asked the people who were engaged in using the Bastion to acknowledge me in writing or by paying me a dollar a year, just to show they couldn't take possession of the land. But they wouldn't do it; they paid no attention to me." And he said, "Either do that or else get it off here, take it away," he said. "I may want to sell this land, and then I'll be badly handicapped if these buildings, that big, old building is on here."
Well, I said, "How did it get here?"

"Oh," he said, "it was brought up here from the waterfront. It was built by the Hudson's Bay Company, or some of their men to protect the miners, they claimed, to protect the workers down on the waterfront."

"Where on the waterfront?"

"Well, down there. Beyond the post office. Somewhere down there, I wouldn't be certain of it, but I remember it being down there, and I know it was brought up, and as I remember, it was brought up in segments. And put on my property." And he said, "They started to do that without even asking me first," he said. "However, I didn't mind that so much, but it didn't do me any harm being there. And I would have left it there if they paid me a dollar a year, or acknowledged to me that it was my land and they were just tenants there, subject to my direction." He said, "I wouldn't have objected at all."

But he said, "They wouldn't do that, and I got worried about the question of title and possession and all that kind of thing, I decided it was either do that - that is, acknowledge my rights, or else get off." He said, "They took the latter course, and without telling me the amount, they had a contract maker," one of the old contractors here, he gave me the name of the contractor, which I don't remember at the moment. I think it was the man I just mentioned, Coulson, I think his name was. I knew Mr. Coulson years afterwards. And that way, the Bastion was removed from Tom Kitchin's land which he either owned or held under option, I say held under option because that was a favourite method of his in doing business - of taking options on lands. I know that he was a very energetic man, and when Sam Robins of the local coal company, Vancouver Island Mining and Land Company would not allow Dunsmuir to ship coal from the mines at Extension, which had lately been found, to the activities of a coloured man by the name of Stark I understand, who discovered the seam. And they cut a roadway from Extension down to Nanaimo, down into the Five Acres. The blast can still be seen through the trees where they cut. But as I say, he wanted to bring the coal that way, and put it in past what is known as Hemans and Walmsley storehouse on Departure Bay Road, long since gone by this time. And take everything down the hill to Pimbury Point, which is been since called Brechin Point. The name was Pimbury Point, and was such for a great many years, and remains so, as far as I know, until the company years afterwards opened up a mine near Pimbury Point and shipped coal there.

34:30

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, this matter is the first time I've heard or read about the Bastion being first constructed down on the waterfront. I haven't seen any sketches...

Victor Harrison
Oh, I have.
William Barraclough
You have?

Victor Harrison
Yes, I have. It was drawn by Jack McGregor, J.C. McGregor, who was a man well posted of the events which took place in early time, and he was quite a sketch artist. I'll show you in the hallway, if you don't mind.

William Barraclough
Yes.

Victor Harrison
One of the pictures of the Bastion which he drew and gave to me as a present. He made this present to me, he said, because I'd been so good in securing an old framed photograph of his father, the late McGregor, who was originally the manager of the coal mines, or at least the underground workings, the digging of the coal.

William Barraclough
Now, we'll take a pause until you produce the picture.

35:29

[recording stops and restarts]

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, we've just inspected the picture that you mentioned of the Bastion, but apparently it's sitting on its original site, that'd be Mr. Kitchin's property at the time.

Victor Harrison
Yes, I think that picture does represent the Bastion at the time it was sitting on Mr. Tom Kitchin's land, which was, this land was behind the opera house.

William Barraclough
There would be hardly any sketches of the Bastion being constructed by the axemen on the waterfront, which it apparently was, but carried up, as you say, in segments.

Victor Harrison
Well, that's the way Tom Kitchin told me. He said, "I think it was carried up in pieces, in segments," he said, "it was brought up." He said, "That's the way I remember it," he said, "I remember they had a kind of a fence around it," he said, "that was packed up somewhere down on the waterfront."

William Barraclough
Now, Mr. Harrison, there are a few questions I'd like to ask you about the coal and the waterfront. To your information, where was the first discovery made, Joseph McKay came with his men?
Victor Harrison
I made inquiries about that many years ago, and the best information I could get was: on the inlet. Somewhere, there was a barge there, run by, used as a butcher shop by Mr. Robertson, and a little further westward, west from that was where that coal was first discovered. And they went across what is now a street, and went under that point of land where there's a tobacco shop now. It was run by the Gray brothers for many years. And from there, they worked their way up.

They worked their way up to the corner of Bastion and Commercial Street. And they worked all under the corner of Bastion and Commercial Street, where there was a hotel run by Mr. Angelo Balzano. He called it the Commercial Hotel, and if you go down that alleyway, leading from Commercial Street into the Eagles building, you will find in that alleyway, on your right hand side as you're going in, a cement capping, a block of cement. That covers the place where a coal cropping came right to the surface, and it was a big hole there. And that keeps that, so that it is now safe. So, they went under Balzano's bridge, and out on the street they had an opening right on the street, on the corner of Commercial and Bastion. More on the Bastion Street side, and they mined, they worked the mine from there. And it was more convenient than coming up from below, from where I mentioned the Gray brothers had their store. They then worked their way across and under the block opposite, that is to say what they call the Vendome block, now the Bank of, Royal Bank of Canada, and they finally got to underneath the old Wilson house, now used as a pool room. And at the back of the Wilson house, the opening will still be shown, which that leads up from the mine, the coal mine.

39:07

William Barraclough
Then this original discovery would be, where we started, right behind where the present Canadian Bank of Commerce is?

Victor Harrison
Well, that was one of the places, but those are all small workings. There are mines all over you might say.

William Barraclough
Yes.

Victor Harrison
But where the big seam, which of great commercial value, was the Douglas seam, and they found that right almost where the old Malaspina Hotel now stands. And I have that confirmed by Mr. Mark Bate, who managed the coal company at one time.

He told me, he said, "I went down that shaft one day." And he said, "I was down in the mine, and I worked my way through, and following the workings that they'd been working opening up, I came out in the valley, that is almost behind where the steam laundry now stands."
I might say this opening is still there to be seen. I met some years ago a couple of young fellows who had an electric flashlight. They said they'd been in there and they roamed quite a distance and they explained where they met water and such. If that's followed through, you'll see that it comes out again in the valley, right behind the building which is below the Bing Kee wooden house that stands on that high, prominently.

William Barraclough
Yes, there are, there's a very nice picture available of the Douglas shaft with the whitewash fence around it. It is sitting right where the Malaspina Hotel is today.

Victor Harrison
Yes, that is boarded over now. It was boarded over several times, the last time it was boarded over was when they were putting up the Malaspina Hotel. I might say that Jack McGregor had another photograph, a picture, of the Bastion, at the original Bastion, in its original position, right down on the waterfront, not so very far from that position in the Malaspina, where the Malaspina Hotel now stands.

I mentioned to him, I said, "Jack, how is this, it's down around the waterfront now?"

"Well," he said, "there's where it was, of course," he said. "It was built down there." And he said, "You see that they have those working houses, the houses for those who were the employees in the mine that worked there." He said, "You'll see all those little houses, but they were all there. They're all gone now," he said.

William Barraclough
Well, Mr. Harrison, this is the first record.

Victor Harrison
I would like to know very much where that original picture of Jack McGregor is. He said it was taken partly from a photograph, and he had Indians in the waterfront, in two canoe loads of Indians down below, right in the water. And above them is the Bastion, and above them again is the little houses meant for the miners and others who worked in the mines. And that picture I think is still in the Bastion records, it should be. It was there at one time I know.

William Barraclough
Mr. Harrison, did you ever see Coal Tyee?

Victor Harrison
Well, I wouldn't, I don't know that I did. I was with Joe Muir a great deal as we were very good friends, and we were among some old Indians, and I think one of them was that old Coal Tyee. He was an old man. And wore a funny looking hat on his head.

William Barraclough
Well, that sounds like him, because Mr. Muir told me that he remembered him quite well.
Victor Harrison
He was not a big Indian. He was a small Indian.

William Barraclough
Well, chances are you saw Coal Tyee. Mr. Muir told me once that at Mr. Pimbury's funeral, Coal Tyee was there.

Victor Harrison
Well, I know Joe Muir saw Coal Tyee. He talked of him frequently to me. And he said he was like most of the other Indians, you know.

William Barraclough
Yes, well now, one or two other questions. I'd like you to, about Departure Bay, the early days of Departure Bay, when you lived there. Will you give us a little story on that?

Victor Harrison
Yeah, we lived in the old house, I think we went there in 1890. And I was born in '84, so I would be about 6 years old at the time. We lived there for some six or seven years, and during that time we moved to Nanaimo. And lived on...a house that our father...on Selby Street, if I remember the name of the street for the moment. And it was afterwards bought by Mr. Mark Bate.

William Barraclough
Well, why would you be living at Departure Bay in those days?

Victor Harrison
Well, we just happen of, there was no particular reason that I know of, except there was no house available at that time, that I can know. We were quite a family. And we lived there, as I say, about six years.

William Barraclough
Right near the, near James Dunsmuir's...

Victor Harrison
I'd say from 1890, and they [must] have left there about '97.

William Barraclough
You'd know that James Dunsmuir was there.

Victor Harrison
Yes, James Dunsmuir lived there. And I remember visiting their place. He was there. He called in, and so did the Dunsmuir women, Mrs. Dunsmuir and some of their lady friends, belonged to their group, and travelled up, taking a look around the country and seeing the old mines and such. Of course, they were very prosperous then, but they had a certain amount of sentimental interest in the place, I suppose. It was a very beautiful
place as they kept it. Nothing like it looks, it looks nothing like it now. They've taken down that wonderful old buildings.

William Barraclough
Yes, it has been pulled down.

Victor Harrison
It was sound as can be. It was sound as they day it was put up, so the workmen who took it down told me.

William Barraclough
Did you ever play with any of James Dunsmuir's children?

Victor Harrison
Oh yes, the family always stayed there, every summer they would come up. They were always over to our house. And we were always with them, I knew them very well. In fact, Bessie called and saw me at Nanaimo several times when she came up. And I showed her the funeral of her dear, old friend and teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Young, the wife of Charles Newton Young, who was the first city clerk of Nanaimo, and afterwards the shipping clerk in Departure Bay for the Dunsmuir interests. She died in '95, and her stone, her headstone, is at the corner of the old graveyard, right down at the corner of...

William Barraclough
That's right Mr. Harrison, I remember when the...

Victor Harrison
It was all [inaudible] ...when I pulled it out and showed it to her, and she was greatly interested.

William Barraclough
I saw that stone, the Young stone, when they arranged all the tombstones in a circle. And that Young stone was there at the head of it, at the time, and the next time I looked, it had gone!

Victor Harrison
You're right, I noticed the same. Someone took it away. I think the Dunsmuir's must have got it. Bessie was most interested with it; that was one of her great friends. And the teacher of the whole family. She was a school teacher before she came here, in England.

William Barraclough
Well, I don't know whether the Dunsmuir's got it, or whether the service club that did the work just plastered it over.

Victor Harrison
Oh, I don't know.
William Barraclough
But I wouldn't...

Victor Harrison
[It's all the same.] Elizabeth's...it reads this way: Elizabeth Young died 1895, and her son, Allan Young, with the motto "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all". I know Mrs. Bessie Dunsmuir, or more properly known, of course, as Bessie Hope, wife of the late Major Hope, was very much interested in this headstone.

William Barraclough
And now to conclude this interview, Mr. Harrison, made Monday morning, September the 16th, 1968, at your residence on Newcastle Avenue, Nanaimo.

Victor Harrison
Thank you very much, Mr. Barraclough. I'm sure it has been very interesting, and I'm glad to have had the opportunity of trying to clear up some of the early events which occurred in and about Nanaimo.

47:06
[recording stops and restarts]

William Barraclough
Victor Birch Harrison, a well-known and highly respected resident of 215 Newcastle Avenue, Nanaimo, passed away on Sunday, July 25th 1971, at the age of 86 years. Born at Victoria, B.C. Mr. Harrison was a prominent barrister and magistrate for many years. Funeral services Friday, July the 30th, 1971, at 3:00 p.m., from the Westwood Chapel of Flowers, with Reverend Dr. E.G. Flagg of St. Paul's Anglican Church officiating. Internment: Nanaimo cemetery.

47:51
[recording ends]