This is Shirley Ramsay, recording Dorothy Constance Gregory, 341 Robson Street, for the Coal Tyee project. Dorothy, I understand that you had a mine, or your family had a mine, in the South Wellington area. Could you tell us the name of the mine?

DG: Ida Clara.

SR: Now this was located past Thelma Griffiths' South Wellington store and was part of a 320-acre tract. How did you work this mine?

DG: How would I say now?

SR: Was it a family project?

DG: Yes.

SR: Your husband and you worked it together, as well as any family members?

DG: Well we had several men that worked it before, but my husband and I worked at different times together. We dug a tunnel for about a hundred feet up on the ridge.

SR: Approximately when did you and your husband start this work?

DG: Oh, that would be in the thirties.

SR: And it had been mined before then?

DG: Yes.

SR: How old was it when you first started? Was it well dug into the hillside? Or was it a shaft of some kind?

DG: It was a 45 degree angle straight down.

SR: When you mined this, you worked it as a family project. Were there any children that helped you as well?

DG: No. We didn't have children at that time.

SR: Just you and your husband.

DG: We had Betty.

SR: Your oldest girl?

DG: Yes.

SR: How did you find this work as a woman? Was it exhausting for you?

DG: No, it was exciting, because we were always looking for coal.

SR: Were there a lot of tunnels in connection with the underground workings by the time you started it?

DG: They had another slope called the Victoria slope. Down -- we had a siding. And they used to load the train cars on there. On this siding, you know. And they had -- oh, let's see -- they had three or four places that they had dug and gone in to. But the Ida Clara was the one that was right under the railway track.
SR: That's not far from the highway.
DG: No, it's not too far.
SR: Now, were you connected to that rail line in the old days, to haul your coal away?
DG: Yes. Because we had a siding there.
SR: Now, where did your coal go from there? Was it loaded in Nanaimo or Ladysmith?
DG: Nanaimo.
SR: Nanaimo Harbour. And that would be the 1930's. Would it still be the old wharf that was down town for that purpose, that Number One used?
DG: No, we loaded our coal right on the siding, and it went in the train. You know, on the train cars. And then either to Victoria, or wherever it was supposed to go.
SR: Oh I see. So you didn't always send it to Nanaimo, wherever it was needed.
DG: Yes, it probably went to Victoria -- you know, you had different places that it went to.
SR: How did you draw up the contracts for selling it, and things like this, in those days? Was it a regular business thing, or how was this done? Who were your customers?
DG: Oh, they had people in Duncan. They had a company there --
SR: Was this a business that needed coal?
DG: Oh yes -- yes -- (two speaking at once here.)
SR: Or was it a --
DG: He distributed coal in Duncan. I don't know if his name was Stanhope, or -- I just can't remember the name right now. But he used to buy a lot of coal from us. And then we had trucks that used to come in and load up. You know, Baird's, Percy Leask, all -- you know -- them sort of fellows would come down and take a ton of pea coal, or lump, or slack, or whatever. You know.
SR: Whatever they needed.
DG: Yes.
SR: Now, they were local people, were they, truckers.
DG: Yes they were.
SR: And did they re-sell your coal to other people, or use it themselves?
DG: Oh, they'd sell it to other people.
SR: So you were actually in the business of selling to someone else who took care of the sale.
DG: Mhm.
SR: I see. Can you think back in the family to when the Ida Clara was first started? Who discovered it?
DG: No, that was before I came along.
SR: There's no story attached to it's great discovery?
DG: No -- it was named after the mother.
SR: Oh!
DG: You know, Mrs. Richardson.
SR: And so it was Ida Clara Richardson.
DG: Yes, it was named after her.
SR: How many family members were there? Three sons, you said?
DG: Three sons. And two daughters. But this was a second marriage. That she had. She married Mr. Richardson, then she had four, I think, three boys, and Senonia & Ida, and Lena. But she had Lena and Ida before she married Mr. Richardson.
SR: Now, with the three sons having the 320 acres divided to ox 106./some odd acres each, were they also mining on their piece?
DG: They were mining. They tried together, but they couldn't get along. They just used to fight -- one -- you couldn't satisfy -- you know.
SR: Everyone. M hm. So they went into business on their own. Were there other EK mines on this 320 acres? Other than the Ida Clara, then?
DG: Oh yes. Yes, there was one, the Victoria slope.
SR: And any others?
DG: They had one or two others because there were -- Fiddick's lived -- you know, had their coal rights alongside of ours, like.
SR: In that area.
DG: In that area. And they were mining when my husband and his brothers and that were mining too.
SR: Was there more than one seam, or was there part of the Douglas seam, do you know?
DG: This was -- oh what would I say -- they had the best coal there , that was right under the track, that Bill said was 28 feet thick, you know.
SR: Fantastic! You must have mined it as a family then for a long, long time. To get it all out.
DG: Well, I don't think it's all out. There's still lots -- you know -- left there.
SR: Has the old slope been closed off that -- the Ida Clara --
DG: Oh yes.
SR: And the Victoria slope as well? None of them are --
DG: They're not open.
SR: Not open at all now.
DG: No.
SR: Now, when you were living in the area, can you describe it? Was South Wellington at that time a town, in the thirties?

DG: Oh yes!

SR: Mhm. And quite a good sized one compared to what it is now, I understand. Is it? Bigger?

DG: They had a big dance hall there. In fact my husband said they had two dance halls there at one time. But they had this one right as you come down the bottom of the hill. They had a great big hall there. And they used to have dances every week, and things like that.

SR: So on your property, you could go into South Wellington, just walk in, it was a short distance. Now, do you remember the site for Number 8 or Number 10 or any of the old mines in South Wellington at all?

DG: Oh, I know where Number 10 is. You know. As you go down the hill.

SR: Right there.

DG: Yes.

SR: Did your workings go over that way, at all?

DG: Ours was down toward the right. The right of that.

SR: Mhm. So you were going north on some of the diggings. Yes. Now, the Victoria slope was the second slope you mentioned. Was it located several feet from the Ida Clara?

DG: Yes -- it would be about -- oh -- a couple of blocks.

SR: Mhm. And was there another slope on that site at all that any of the family worked?

DG: They had different tunnels and that there. It'd be pretty hard to say just how many.

SR: Oh yes. It's actually all dug on slopes that really went right down from the surface into the ground at an angle, so that it appeared on the surface at one time, to start mining.

DG: Not far from the top.

SR: Not far.

DG: No.

SR: That's incredible. Especially three of them on the one piece of property. Now, how many years did you work this mine with your husband, Dolly?

DG: Oh, gosh, it went quite a few years that they were into mining. And then there was a group of them got together, you know, and they mined, oh, for four or five years, I suppose it'd be.
SR: Now, when you were in there yourself, how did you do the actual work? Did your husband set the charges, and then you go in and get rid of the coal or load it, or what -- exactly how did you work your place?

DG: Well he used to -- we weren't allowed to set charges -- you know. And when we were digging this tunnel up on -- up by Cinnabar Valley, we put up timbers, you know. And Bill would always make sure that things were pretty safe. You know. Of course he'd been mining for a long time. You know, in and out of it steady. And so he was pretty careful, the only thing that we had gone in about a hundred feet, and the inspector came up from Victoria, and said that we were looking after our heads all right, but rules are rules, and we couldn't go no further without a fire boss. And Bill wasn't a fire boss. So we had to quit.

SR: And so you started an actual slope not far from Cinnabar valley that you never did get into. Is it still there?

DG: It was still there. Al Addison bought the property, like, -- not the property, but the mineral rights. And so he had a mine up there. Just about --oh, a hundred feet or so from where --

SR: you tried to go in.

DG: From where we were.

SR: In the Cinnabar Valley.

DG: And he got quite a bit of coal out of there. But it was the top. And it wasn't the best coal.

SR: So that it would get better as you went down.

DG: Yes.

SR: On those claims. Mhm. Now, as far as the actual work that you did, then, it was pick and shovel business.

DG: Oh yes.

SR: And you started early in the morning.

DG: We had a wheelbarrow there at times, yes.

SR: It was incredibly hard work for you. You said that you found it exciting and that you liked it. Did you find that it paid well? In those days?

DG: We never got very much out of it. But -- if we'd have had the coal right there, but you had to dig to get it. And lots of times you went through a lot of rock and you never got anything.

SR: How is it that you were able to have the mineral rights for that area? Because the family had passed it down -- yes -- but how did they escape the Dunsmuir claim of so many feet each side of the railroad?
DG: I think they got it, you know, being the first.
SR: Yes. Before Dunsmuir probably.
DG: You see, the grandfather -- my husband's father, was the first white boy **born** in Nanaimo. And so that's how that came along. Him being the first white boy.
SR: Yes. Can you remember any of the old family stories about settling in that area?
DG: Well I've heard them talking a lot about different subjects, in there. They used to have property down below the Bastion here. The bridge?
SR: Yes.
DG: But that was all water at that time.
SR: Yes, it would be. Yes. So it was filled in and it was eventually sold.
DG: I don't know if it went for tax sales, or just what, you know.
SR: Now, when you were going to work each day, in the thirties, how did you get to your mine site? Where was your home located from it?
DG: Right in Cinnabar Valley.
SR: So you lived in the valley?
DG: Yes. We had a big farm there.
SR: Mhm. And it was on your section of the 106 acres?
DG: Well at that time it was all together. You know. It wasn't divided until the father died.
SR: Now, how do you remember the miners of that day? Were they a hard-working bunch that --
DG: Oh yes!
SR: And was there several of them doing what you did? Working your own claim?
DG: Oh yes, they had different ones that had their own mines. And had property and could do that.
SR: Now, you told me when the fire boss inspected the Cinnabar valley area, you didn't go any farther with it. You didn't have any trouble **mining** up until that time though?
DG: Well we knew that we were not allowed to be doing it, you know. But we were just looking for coal, and if we found it, that was fine. But we knew that we had to have a fire boss all right. And right after that my husband put in for it and got the fire boss ticket.
SR: So he went back to it, did he?
DG: No, we didn't after that. We -- I just forget what happened after that. We were cutting trees, and cutting timber, and so we were in the wood business.
SR: So you worked the surface as well as underground?
DG: Right!
SR: Now, how would you put in your day? You would get up, in the morning, and with your husband, make breakfast for the two of you, and then go to your claim wherever it happened to be, for the day?
DG: Mhm.
SR: How many actual claims did you work? Together.
DG: Just the two that I worked in.
SR: Just the two. And one would be the Ida Clara. And -- not the Victoria slope?
DG: Not the Victoria slope, no.
SR: But the second one was Cinnabar.
DG: Up at Cinnabar.
SR: How did you get the coal from Cinnabar? Was there a siding going into that area?
DG: No. We didn't -- we had a small vein going in there, but it wasn't worthwhile. We were a little too high. We should have been lower. And it was down lower. You know. Because Al Addison got quite a bit of coal out of -- about a hundred feet over from where we were. You know.
SR: How far down did he go? He went quite far down in there, would he?
DG: I wouldn't say he went down that far, down, you know. But he had different men working for him, and then you see, he wasn't there. Al wasn't. And
SR: What year would this be, Dolly?
DG: Oh, Al worked that claim in the forties.
SR: So this was quite late, yes. Mhm.
DG: I would say he even was in it to the fifties. Worked on that claim of his.
SR: Do you know if he had more than one slope, next door to you?
DG: Oh no, not there, he didn't.
SR: But he had other claims as well, did he?
DG: He just had that one that I know of, the slope that was over from where we had been.
SR: Now, if it wasn't good, it was more or less because you couldn't dig down and get into it, and find out exactly what it was up to before you sold. No one has made an attempt to do that, after you left? On the Cinnabar valley one?
DG: No, just Al Addison.
SR: Just Al Addison. Well then he took over yours, did he, when you sold?
DG: I haven't sold. I still have my coal rights.
SR: Oh, you still have it! Oh good!
DG: I still have coal rights. And Al bought Ben Richardson's coal rights. For five thousand dollars.
SR: I see. So he has more than one thing he can do.
DG: Yes.
SR: Now, what about your family life at home? Did you ever find that your work conflicted with being a housewife?
DG: Oh, it sure did!
SR: How did you manage both jobs then?
DG: Well, you tried. You know. You did what you could. But I liked working outside better than I did in.
SR: Inside. That's great. Who kept the records of your business and whatnot? Were you the family bookkeeper as well?
DG: Well we didn't bother too much about bookkeeping then. You know what I mean. You marked down what you paid and what you owed, and all this. And it was just a small scale --
SR: Operation.
DG: It wasn't a big scale operation. It was just a small one, you know.
SR: What did you like the most about it?
DG: Well, when it was time to go home, you weren't ready to go home. You were ready to work another couple of hours or so because you always thought-- another -- you know, pick a little more, and you'd hit it. You know. That sort of thing.
SR: Was there lots of rock in with your coal? Say in the Ida Clara. had
DG: The Ida Clara was a good mine. It/brought out some real good coal. You know, the real grade stuff.
SR: About how far were you down into the earth and into this slope? How many feet would you say the tunnels were?
DG: It went down -- there is plans in the safe there, but it went -- it had a real steep incline. Real steep. You know. We had railway cars, little railway cars.
SR: You'd have to have someone there to -- or a winch system to --
DG: Yes, but --
SR: To pull this out. You and your husband did this as well?
DG: Oh yes.
SR: Everything. Did you lose a lot of coal on the slope on the way up?
EX:DG: Well if you overloaded the little wagon, you know, it would -- but you had the little train wheels and all that sort of thing, and it would work pretty good.
SR: Now how did you arrange to do your shipping through the E&N track? Was this just something, that you were allowed to use it? For your shipping?

DG: It was a siding there that we had, and whenever we needed a car, that you’d load the coal in, you’d just get in touch with the E&N, and they would drop one off for us.

SR: So when the coal came out of the ground, it sat on the siding, for a while, in the coal cars. How did it get into the bigger cars on the E&N, or was it just shipped that way?

DG: No, we had a truck, and dump it into the car, you know the coal cars --

SR: The larger coal cars?

DG: Yes.

SR: What kind of dumping system was this? When it came out of the ground, it was on the siding. What -- how did you get it from the small cars to the bigger rail cars?

DG: Well, we had to go round with the truck. You see. And they had a landing there.

SR: Oh. And that would raise it and you could dump it in --

DG: It would raise it and you could dump it --

SR: From the truck.

DG: Yes.

SR: I see. Now, as far as your years in the mine are concerned, can you remember any bad accidents in the Ida Clara -- gas, or cave-ins, or anything that really scared you, when you were in the business?

DG: No. There was a lot of water. And we’d have to go down lots of times and have a barrel, you know, and with buckets and just -- because ours was just a small scale. You know. And they had the old Alexander just up from us. You know. And -- that belonged to the Collieries. And like I say, ours was a small scale, it wasn’t millions or thousands of tons, you know. It was -- you know -- maybe 98 a month, or 200, something like that, but it wouldn’t be much more.

SR: And with both of you working, you did fairly good at it. And what else would a woman do in those days in Nanaimo, in the hungry thirties?

DG: We tried everything, you know. But that I really enjoyed. I didn’t mind that at all.

SR: In South Wellington, can you remember stores, in those days, or anything like that?

DG: Well there used to be Taylor’s store, and he had everything in it!

SR: And that was the one bought out by Griffiths, eventually, is this the one:
DG: Well, that eventually moved in the same spot, like, but I'm not sure if the store burnt down or just what. I believe it did. But Mr. Taylor, he had everything in there. Anything you wanted, he had it.

SR: How did you get from there to Nanaimo? Was it the old original Island Highway, was the only one being used then?

DG: Yes. Although you could go through Southfield, if you wanted to go through by Maki's road, --you know where Bill Maki lives?

SR: No, I don't. Southfield was a mine --

DG: There was a mine there, that where I think was it 21 miners got flooded -- the water broke in -- and they got flooded, and they brought them up in sacks. That was just before my time out there, you know.

SR: So it would be just after the turn of the century, say?

DG: Oh, that would be around '14, '15 I would say. Somewhere around there, I'm not too sure, because it was before my time.

SR: Do you know the location of the Southfield Mine?

DG: Just about. We used to go often past there all the time. You could take your car. In fact when we moved we took truck through there, it had a bridge, a little bridge, and you went over the bridge, and straight through into South Wellington.

SR: I see. So it was also in the South Wellington area, not too far.

DG: Mhm.

SR: We have a map coming, and we're trying to pinpoint all of these sites. So far there's 75! But it's an incredible amount to remember, where it is, and exactly where you could find it. You get them all confused.

SR: Do you remember anything about the other miners, or -- you were more or less -- I understand, very respected by most of the older miners. And it was them that told me about you because --

DG: Who was that?

SR: Scotty Gilchrist, and -- he was a miner for 32 years and he remembered you quite well. So, you got along really good with them -- there was no jibing or anything like that about your job?

DG: No, in fact I never thought anything about a woman working. I just liked it, and it was very interesting. You know, of course, if you hit the coal and that -- well, it could give you any amount of money. You know.

SR: Now, did the family ever think about selling out to interests, before --

DG: Oh yes. They had different offers, you know, from The Granby -- yes. Well Mr. Henderson was the fire boss -- well he wasn't the fire boss, he was the big fellow, you know. He's dead now. But we went to his house there, he asked us out and so we went and that. But the boys couldn't get
along, and so it fell through.
SR: Now, the Granby claim, how far was it from the South Wellington area?
DG: Oh, Granby was quite a ways from South --
SR: This side. This side.
DG: Mhm.
SR: Did you see the town of Granby at all, when it was in its heyday?
DG: No.
SR: You didn't.
DG: No. I seen some of the buildings and that after it had gone. Like it closed. But not when it was working.
SR: I see. As far as the mining goes then, it was a very small operation, and you more or less enjoyed it. What did you do for recreation in those days to get away from the business? Did you go places, like go on trips, or do anything like this?
DG: No. No, you didn't. Well we had cows and things, like that, so we were doing both. You know, we were farming, and mining at the same time.
SR: It must have been an incredibly long day, yes.
DG: Well, I've seen us put hay in in the moonlight. That's how busy you were!
SR: As far as your days in the mine is concerned now, you would come home, and you would have another whole meal to cook, and things, at the end of the day, and this didn't seem to bother you. Did you actually have any help with this tremendous day you put in?
DG: No. No. You just did it. We had cows to milk, and that, on top of that, you know. Come in, and you'd eat, and go and milk the cows, and come back, and all that sort of thing. You made butter, and -- you wouldn't think of doing it today. When I look back now I just think, God, how did we do it?
SR: Now, I don't have much else to ask you, but do you remember any particular things about your job that you thought were pretty special, or horrible, or something like this? The fact that you were always working in the black. And having to go underground, wearing miners' -- say -- lamps, to see your way in the dark. Or any of this. Did this business ever get to you after a while, did you wish you could dump it all, or --
DG: No! Never thought of that. My mother used to say to me, I never seen a woman that would do something like that. You know. And I said, Well I enjoy it! And when I was cutting wood, you know, we used to get -- well I've seen me split two cord of wood a day, and that's a lot for -- but you get real hardened to it, and you can just cut that wood like cake, you know.
Once you make the first cut, it's not so bad.
SR: You actually burned wood rather than the coal itself then, in your own home?
DG: No, we had both.
SR: Now, how was your farm electrified?
DG: My husband had a Delco plant.
SR: And that is an --
DG: Your own lighting --
SR: Generator plant.
DG: Yes.
SR: I see. Now was this something, how did it operate? Was it a farm thing that a lot of farmers had, or --
DG: Oh we had lights in the barn all through, and right in the house. A lot of farmers didn't have it because they couldn't afford it.
SR: How did it operate? Did you give it oil, or was it -- it wasn't an oil-fired generator --
DG: Oh, no, you start the motor. So it must have run on gas.
SR: I see. Now as far as putting your day in is concerned, and what you did all day, and all the rest of it, was your farm actually something that you regretted leaving when you left all this behind? And moved to the city. How did you adjust to the kind of work you did in here then? Was it completely different --
DG: Oh it sure was!
SR: You liked it better?
DG: No! I - (end of Side 1)
SR: We got to the point where you moved into the city. Did you move to this address at all, or was it somewhere else?
DG: No, I was on Irwin Street.
SR: For a while. And you raised your family there?
DG: Well see, Bill took sick, and he was sick for two years, so --
SR: Was this something that happened as a result of his mining, this illness?
DG: I would say it had a lot to do with it. 'Cause he was a working fool. He never thought of going anywhere, he was just work work work work. And I think it had a lot to do with it. He strained -- you know, his heart. That's what it was, that took him.
SR: The muscle. The heart muscle, and all through here.
DG: His heart was enlarged. You know, with all this work that he did, and you know. So I had to take him to Vancouver. He was two years that he couldn't even walk up Commercial Street. And -- we used to go hunting, on
we used to go hunting, on top of that, you know. And there wasn't a
mountain high enough for him! And then, you know -- he was a man that's
worked so hard -- couldn't even walk up Commercial Street. So it really
took -- you know, took a lot out of him.
SR: How did you ever get along, with a family to raise?
DG: Well, I could take Betty in -- there was five years difference between
the children. I had the two then. And I could take Betty in to my mother's.
You know. And my mother would look after her. While I was --
SR: Working at something.
DG: Working at something.
SR: Mhm. So you've done other jobs as well as mining, like mail delivery,
and things like this too. Get going again, and find your way around --
DG: Well I took the mail when he got sick. You know. And he was two years
that he couldn't do a stroke of work.
SR: Now, as far as the other miners were concerned, did you ever meet any
of the miners who worked other claims?
DG: Oh yes! There was Fiddicks, and --
SR: Your neighbours out there.
DG: They were neighbours, like, their land was right next to ours.
And there was -- oh, different fellows that you knew. You know, that you'd
see, going, when you -- going to work, or something like that. Course
when we were out at Cinnabar valley, we were like on our own, because there
was just the Torkkos farm, and ourselves. Down there. Just the two
farms, you see. Now you wouldn't recognize the farm. It's just all houses.
SR: The lake at the bottom, that small lake at the bottom of Cinnabar
valley, there would be coal underneath that, wouldn't there? It was more
or less a swampy lake, and it still is, at the bottom of the hill.
DG: It's a swampy/lake, you know. We had gone swimming in it, but
you get all those things stuck to you. Leeches.
SR: Now, as far as the other miners are concerned, that you met, did you
ever go to miners' picnics or join any other miners' organization of
any kind?
DG: Oh no.
SR: Because you were working on your own?
DG: Right.
SR: Now, when you met the other ones, did they envy you because of your
own claim? Or did any of them ever try to prospect certain areas for claims
as well? Or was this all tied up by the Dunsmuir people?
DG: I would say that -- Dunsmuirrs never bothered us. You know. Like we
had our own, and so we just stayed with it.
But I don't think there was anybody envied anybody because you worked too hard for what you got. You know what I mean, you didn't get an awful lot for coal them days. One time there I think it was $2.50 for a ton of pea coal. And $8.00 for the lump, you know.

The good lump stuff?

Yes, and look what you pay today. And then you had to pay your -- not tonnage -- well, tonnage, it would be. You know. So much every ton you took out. You had to pay to the government. But like I say, it was just a small scale. It wasn't -- you know, large at all. Just a small scale.

Now, you didn't go to any of the miners' picnics, or any of their do's, then, did you, in the old days?

No. We just were mostly on our own.

Has any of the other relatives of your husband, did they remain at their claims long after? At all, or did they leave --

Well, Ben wasn't much of a worker. The oldest one. He wasn't much of a worker. But Jock, he worked in Number Ten.

And his name was Richardson as well?

Yes.

He worked in Number Ten in South Wellington. Are any of them still alive?

No, the three boys are all gone.

Now, as far as the mining before you is concerned, do you remember any of the happenings, or anything that you can remember about the Ida Clara that stand out in your mind as having been told by the family? Something particular about the mine, or something that happened to any of them in their mining days?

I don't think they had any serious accidents there, you know, and I remember Bill telling me one time about the fire boss, when he had let a shot go, I think his name was Mr. Wright. Was a fire boss. And he had passed out after he had fired the shot. And Bill got him out of there. And so when he got home he told his wife that if it wasn't for Bill he wouldn't have been alive. That was the only incident that I remember Bill saying.

Would he pass out from say gas fumes, or what?

Yes, it would be something like that.

Now, when you were pick and shoveling, and getting the stuff out, did you ever notice that the rock you were into was under any kind of great pressure, so that you had to get out?

No, no.

Yes, they had an awful lot of trouble with explosions and whatnot at Granby.

Yes, well they were very deep. There's be more pressure, down ther'
down there, I would say.

SR: Would you say that your workings went anything like a quarter of a mile Down, through the slope and through tunnels?

DG: Not straight down.

SR: No, but I meant along. Lengthwise.

DG: Oh, they're quite -- there's maps. And they got quite long roads.

SR: Are these family maps, or are they in the Archives, or --

DG: Oh, they'll be down in Victoria. The government would have all the maps of any mining that's going, in Victoria. You'd find them all there.

SR: Well does that mean that you would add on to them when you worked farther underground and send that information to Victoria?

DG: That's what they used to do.

SR: Oh, so someone always did that. Did you have inspectors come up as well?

DG: Uuhh.

SR: How often would the inspectors come?

DG: Oh, I'm not just sure. But I would say once a month anyway.

SR: They wouldn't do this additional mapping themselves, would they?

DG: Oh, they would take down notes, and you know, how far ahead you'd gone. Or where you were heading for.

SR: I see. Now, how was your winch powered? For removing the coal from the mine?

DG: Just an old motor -- car motor.

SR: I see. So it was kind of like -- a pulley system? To get it up out of the mine? And up the slope, using an old -- would it be Ford motor?

DG: That's what it would be.

SR: And you didn't have any breakdowns, or anything like this?

DG: Oh, once in a while.

SR: Did you have to go back then and pick much of the coal up?

DG: Well, it run pretty good. They kept the motor going, you know.

SR: you had someone on the surface, as well as both of you under the ground, then?

DG: No, well we'd load the car and that, and Bill would go up and pull it up, you know.

SR: Oh, so he operated the levers, or whatever was necessary --

DG: Yes.

SR: You had no signal system or anything like that between you?

DG: No!

SR: As far as the miners go in your area, could you name places where they congregated, or any particular functions that they had, you weren't far from
from Number Ten. Was there any particular things that they did in your neighborhood, on their days off, like go to the Cassidy, or did they have cribbage tournaments, or what did they do?

DG: They sure weren't playing cards them days, very much. (laughter).
No, mostly drinking, you know. My husband wasn't a drinker, nor a smoker.
SR: So you never actually got in with the crowd that did drink at all.
DG: No. no.
SR: Were there bunkhouses at South Wellington at all that you remember?
DG: Not that I know of.
SR: Not near Number Ten or anything?
DG: There was later on, before Number Ten closed. They had showers, and everything for the men. But in our day we never had -- you had to go home and wash.
SR: How far away from Number Ten was Number Eight? The old Number Eight shaft?
DG: I think Number 8 was just by our line. 'Cause they used to come shooting out of -- you know -- on the ground there, with their little cars.
SR: It was an earlier mine, was it?
DG: Now I don't know for sure how long that mine went. But when I used to go down, after I had Betty, and I went down to take Bill's lunch, you'd see the miners coming up with their cars of coal, you know. With the rope riders. And they'd come up out of the ground there, and I used to watch them, when they were coming out, and they'd take the load over to wherever it was going.
SR: And this was on the edge of your property?
DG: Yes. On the other side. We were on one side and they were on the other. And then there was Fiddick's north of that.
SR: Hmm. Well that's great. Now, as far as their operations were concerned, could you actually hear things when you were lying in bed at night? You could hear the mine running in South Wellington?
DG: Oh yes, you could hear the mines and that -- you know, Number 10, going, when we were living there.
SR: Were there whistles, for calling the miners to work? Like Number One operated?
DG: I think they did have a sort of a -- I know Number One did down here, before I was married. Number One used to have a whistle there that, you know, it starts the shifts and -- but I just can't remember if they had that or not.
SR: Now in your neighborhood also, did you ever feel underground explosions from some distance away, where they were actually blasting open new areas under the ground?
DG: No. No.
SR: You couldn't. I have actually heard that people lying on the riverbank on our area could hear the underground blasts. xxx
DG: My brother used to work over at Protection, and they used to hear the boat when the boat went out. You know.
SR: And that would be the propeller.
DG: They could always tell when it was 2:30, the boat was going out.
SR: So how many other miners were there in your family? Your brother, was one.
DG: My brother was a miner, yes, he worked up in Cumberland, and Number One, Protection.
SR: Was he younger than you?
DG: No, he was older than me.
SR: Did he have any particular accidents that he had, or situations that he got into?
DG: Yes, he had two or three bad accidents. He got crushed, and his shoulder still isn't right today.
SR: Did this happen at Protection?
DG: No, I think that happened in Cumberland.
SR: Well I haven't interviewed anyone from Cumberland yet, so that's news. How long did he work up there? Was it -- the mine going for a long time up there
DG: Oh, Cumberland's got mines that's been going for years.
SR: I don't remember when any of them closed down, but he quit, due to an accident, so that he wouldn't be there --
DG: But he got into the school board, and so he stayed with that. He's in Courtenay now. He's retired.
SR: Well maybe we'll get to him! As far as the rest of your family is concerned did any of the fathers besides your husband's family, like, your father, did he work in the mines?
SG: No, my father was a plumber. xxx
SR: In the early days in Nanaimo. xxx
DG: He used to have a fish and chip store. He was a jack of all trades. Really.
SR: Do you remember where that business is located in Nanaimo?
DG: Yes, right down over the hill. It used to be called The Old English Fish and Chip Store. Right above the L&M. On Wallace Street.
SR: So your family was in business in the early days. Did you learn the business or do anything when you were growing up in the business?

DG: No. No, I just got married when I was 18, and that was it.

SR: So you moved from the city life to the farm. And you liked the farm better?

DG: I liked the farm. You know, I liked animals, and farming was really interesting. You know, they called farmers -- they think they don't know nothing, but they're the smartest ones going, really.

SR: They had the fresh air, I guess. Did you notice that the city itself in those days, like when you were little in the 1920's and later, most of the city(had at least 5000 miners)in the 20's there, was the city always black with smoke, with the air, more or less everybody burning coal in those days, how did the city look?

DG: Well that's what they did, was burn coal. So it would be a kind of sooty atmosphere here.

SR: Now, can you remember anything about Nanaimo city also when you were little? What was where the Bastion Street bridge is? Now. That would be right in front of the fish and chip place, going that way. Was there one? There was no Bastion Street bridge?

DG: Oh yes, there always was -- I came here when I was 9. And I've always remembered the bridge there.

SR: So it was there in the 20's probably.

DG: Mhm.

SR: Now when you went across it, you went into the downtown area, were the streets paved?

DG: Yes.

SR: What did the town look like in those days. Was it all older buildings? Were there wooden sidewalks or were they cement sidewalks?

DG: Cement.

SR: Cement. So everything was pretty well settled in the city and businesses would arrive and spring up, and you would have certain stores that you would go to and do your shopping and whatnot. What were your favourite old stores down town?

DG: Let's see - they had an old Safeway. It used to be in where the Rendezvous is now. They had a Safeway there. They had a Safeway next to Anderson's store.

SR: Two of them/
No, they moved from Anderson's over to the Rendezvous. And they were there, and they had Johnny Bow (?) - he had a store. Up on Nicol Street there, you know, going up by the cenotaph there. You know, below the old fire hall. And oh, Hughes' had a store, grocery store in the middle of town, just, let's see, this side of Fletchers. And, oh, there's been a lot of changes. You know.

SR: Now, when you were a woman and had to go shopping down town, you came in from the country, to do your shopping, and after you were married and all that, would it be once a month, once every two weeks, or -- were you in the habit then as we are now, of picking up a newspaper and seeing if there were bargains, and then going shopping?

DG: Yes. Oh yes.

SR: And they had more or less advertised sales then, just like they do now?

DG: Oh yes.

SR: And so, you would get a paper, out where you are. Would you?

DG: No, we'd pick one up in town if we were in town.

SR: What is the earliest method of transportation you had for getting around?

DG: Oh no, no. We had horses on the farm. We had two horses. But we always had a car.

SR: None of your horses were ever used in your mining.

DG: No. I believe one of them, they had the small horse that they worked, before I came along. They had a mule. But I wasn't working in the mine at that time. But they did have a mule when the men -- there was Johnnie Unsworth, do you know Johnnie Unsworth? Well he's a fire boss, and he worked in our mine, and -- him and my husband worked together quite a bit. Later on. And there was several that was working that Ida Clara there. After -- let's see, was it before -- there was quite a few men that worked in that Ida Clara.

SR: And they all worked for your husband?

DG: Well, and his brother, you know. When they got along. But they -- the brothers didn't get along good at all.

SR: Now how did you dress when you went into the mine? Was it ever necessary for you to cover your face or anything like this, to keep the coal dust out of your eyes, or any of this business --

DG: No, you'd just have your cap and the light on it. --

SR: Light on it. And was it open?

DG: No.

SR: No.

DG: No, it was closed.
SR: And how did it operate? Was it a small battery in those days?
DG: Batteries. Used to come home, and the minute you took them off you put them on the batteries, and next morning you took them off, you know. Recharged.
SR: And that would do you all day down in there.
DG: Mhm.
SR: Did you test your mine for gas before you went in? At all?
DG: No, we didn't really have to. That mine seemed to -- outside of water, you know, that was the biggest problem. The water coming in. See, we were getting a lot of water from Number 10, you know. It used to come in there. At least we thought it was coming from there.
SR: So your diggings wouldn't be too far from Number 10?
DG: No, not too far at all.
SR: The water problem, you said you had some kind of system for getting it out. How did you get the water out of the mine?
DG: Oh, we would just take a barrel and put it in the car, and go down and you'd have buckets, and just bail it out.
SR: You didn't have a pumping system?
DG: No. Oh, we did have a pump too. We had a pump there that was workin -- there was a couple times we couldn't work because of the water. And we had to have this here pump down there for a few days.
SR: You felt damp when you were in there then, a lot of the time?
DG: Oh yes, yes you did.
SR: And you wore rubbers, or heavier boots, the real lace-up miners boots, would it be.
DG: Just -- you know -- heavy shoes.
SR: Now, how would this affect your hands? Would you always wear gloves when you were -- on the shoveling...?
DG: I never wore gloves.
SR: Never!
DG: Never.
SR: Never.
DG: Never wore gloves.
SR: Oh. And your hands survived quite well. And still have! I don't know how!
SR: And so when you came out of there, you were pretty black, and went immediately to the showers at home, did you?
DG: Well, we had a bath. We didn't have showers then, you know. So we had a bath though. And that was like, we had this Delco plant, and so the barn had all lights in it and we figured we were pretty well advanced.
because the neighbours hadn't got lights until, oh -- we had moved out of there, you know, a few years back. And we had the lights then. So we figured with the Delco plant we were doing pretty good.

SR: Now, the Delco plant, was that at Cinnabar?
DG: Yes.

SR: What about the days when you were at the Ida Clara, did you have a different system?
DG: This is, you know, both. Both there, and then then when the father died, he -- then it was divided into three parts, for the three boys.

SR: Now, as far as this area was concerned, did you ever, say, visit Victoria, or other places, to talk to your buyers, or anything of this kind of thing?
DG: No, they came to you.

SR: They came to you and wanted to buy the coal. So the arrangements were made through them and the price was settled right there.
DG: Mhm.

SR: Do you ever remember any of your coal being shipped to Frisco? Or any of those places?
DG: No. Mostly Victoria and Duncan.

SR: Do you remember any discoveries of new mines either in your area, or anything that you particularly remember that happened in connection with the mines while you were mining? Say, was there any bad floods or fires or anything in South Wellington itself?
DG: No. I don't think so. Outside of that one I was telling you about, where the men all got drowned.

SR: In southfield?
DG: Yes.

SR: Just before your time on the mining scene. How many days a year would you work? Would you work every day, or would you have Saturday and Sunday off,
DG: Oh, we worked every day if we felt like it.
SR: And you did your farming as well. So it was a dawn to dark working day. Now, there wasn't any particular thing that you would have to go to the government for. You said you paid them some kind of royalty, did you?
DG: Yes. So much a ton. I think it was either 15 cents a ton, you know.
SR: What exactly was this for? Was it because you were an operator, and every operator did this?
DG: Yes.
SR: So that no matter --
DG: I think it went to around, it was 15 to 25 cents, that you paid a ton. Every ton you sold you had to pay two bits to the government.

XR: I see, and this would come out of your profits as well. What else would come out of your profits? Were you allowed to charge all your equipment off in those days, or did you have to file income tax returns on your money?

DG: Oh we never had income tax --

SR: You didn't have all that stuff in those days at all?

DG: No.

SR: Was there any particular thing you always looked forward to as far as something you wanted to buy for the farm, or something for yourself with your money, or --

DG: you were always looking forward to buying something else, you know. Either some little pigs, or, you know.

SR: Something for the farm to keep it going.

DG: Yes,

SR: Who did you sell your farm produce for, your extra produce?

DG: Oh, you went to the creamery. And they took your cream.

SR: So that was delivered every day as well.

DG: No, every second day. We didn't have to go every day, you know.

SR: Where was the creamery?

DG: Right up there on -- I think they've got a -- what is it there now?

SR: So you sold your animals? Was there a farmers market in those days?

DG: Oh, you went to the butcher, and asked the butcher if he needed a veal. And then you killed it the day before. And hung it up.

SR: So you did your own butchering as well?

DG: Oh yes.

SR: Now this means that you would deliver him his meat and he would cut it up and there would also be an exchange over any animals that you wanted to sell. What animals did you sell -- pigs?

DG: Mhm, yes.

SR: Beef cattle as well?

DG: No, mostly calves and we kept the cows mostly for milking. And we raised a lot of calves. When they got six weeks you sold the calves.

SR: Would you sell those to the butcher or would they be raised by someone?

DG: No, no. We sold them to the butcher.

SR: As well. Right from the mother. They just drank right from the mother and that was veal, you know. And you only got 12 cents, 15 cents a pound. And look what you pay today.
SR: And this was in the '20's. Did things fall off badly in the '30's around here?

DG: This would be around the '30's that I'm talking about.

SR: So you did all right then. You weren't more or less in the hungry thirties where people were starving around you and all the rest of it.

DG: No. We helped a lot of people. We had a friend there that I had forgotten and she said Dolly I'll never forget you, she said, You brought me a sack of potatoes and she said we had nothing to eat.

SR: And this was in your area, was it?

DG: Yes. And I had forgotten all about it. I never even thought about it. You know. Because when you're on a farm you've always got extra. That's what I like about a farm. And anybody comes you're always giving. You always got something to give them.

SR: That's great. So your family got through pretty well. Until your husband's illness. What about your brothers, did they suffer any unemployment and things like this, in the mines, were they ever laid off in the '30's?

DG: I had like the one brother living here. And no, he went up to Cumberland and he moved up there and he stayed up there, and he got on the school board and he stayed with that. And now he's retired in Courtenay.

SR: Now how about illnesses of the miners, did any of your friends that were mining or anyone you knew have troubles with lungs?

DG: Oh yes, all the Moretti brothers. You know, Jimmie Moretti, and Joe, and in fact the whole three of them just went one after another. And that's with the coal dust. But you see, working in rock the way them boys did, they got extra money. (End of Tape).