

Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI)

Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Leon Dyrgas and Bill Pasemko

Interviewer: Winston Gereluk

Dates: November 2005

Location: Canmore

Index: Canmore Miners – mine shutdown - conditions in the mine - blow-outs - rock falls - deaths - roof bolting - company store - ‘wagon wheels’ - East Coulee - wash house - Canmore Hotel - United Mine Workers of America - union hall - Union Christmas Party - community - hockey - Black Friday - Pocklington - Three Sisters Development - dismantling mine - pension - wildlife patterns - tourist boom - walking tour to Cairns and #3 mine sites

Q: Where do you two come from and how did you come to work in Canmore?

BP: My name is Bill Pasemko. I was born and raised in Carval, Alberta, just west of Edmonton. I started in the mines in 1945 in Mountain Park, then worked at Robb on the coal branch, and then at Wabamum. Then I went to East Coulee and Drumheller, and worked there for 12 years before coming here in 1960. I've been here mining ever since, except for the last 12 years, when the mine shut down. I went to Banff Springs and worked there for those 12 years.

I worked in all of the mines out here, but the first one was on Cairn seam by #3, and I worked in all the others, except for #5.

LD: My name's Leon Dyrgas. I was born and raised here in Canmore, and so I've seen all the big changes, and can compare then to now. I quit school when I was going in to grade 11, and started in the mine as a labourer. I was in as a labourer for 3 or 4 years, when one of the bosses down there said that I should get into a trade. So I went to school to be a welder, which I did after I got my ticket in 1965, as a first class welder. I worked in the mine as a welder in the shop, and then I went underground too, until the mine shut down in 1979, July 13th, Black Friday. After that I went to work in the golf course for a month, until I got called into Exshaw and I worked at the Exshaw Cement Plant as a welder until I retired 3 years ago.

Q: Describe the jobs you had in the mine.

BP: At first I was loading for miners off a chute. The coal would come down chutes, and I'd load it into the cars, and the motor would take them away to the tippie. After that, I went to the #3 mine, packing timber and loading cars for the miners. It was a lot of hard work, you did a lot of that work pushing the coal by hand, a couple hundred feet sometimes. And you would be packing timber up a pitch, that was hard work. Then I gradually went into digging coal, and ended up as a utility man, doing everything that there was to do in the mines.

LD: As a welder, you had to weld on the pan line things that came in broken. I can't even remember some of the names of the things that we had to fix; the cradles, for example, they would always break, and you'd have to weld them together again. We'd weld parts of the water pumps that wore out, in which case, we'd have to build them up with brass. In the tippie we would be structuring new belt line, the frames for the belt lines, and almost everything else involved with it. In the crusher we'd build up hammers to crush the coal, you'd have to build up the hammers, and all parts around them. If the pay loader broke down or the arm on a pay loader broke, you'd have to weld it. In general, I would have to attend to everything to do with welding.

Q: What were the pay and working conditions like when you started working in the mines?

BP: The pay was pretty good, compared to all the other jobs; mines used to pay about the best, in fact. When I started here in 1960 it was about, I forget how much. But it was good. I had a family of 3, and we seemed to get by pretty good.

Q: What was it like to be a miner, from the point of view of health and safety?

BP: It was hard work. After you got used to it as far as basic safety goes, you got used to watching for roof falls and stuff like that. You got used to that and just went along and tried to make it as safe as you could. It wasn't that dangerous really, when you got used to it. The most common thing we had to watch for was the roof falling. When you were digging coal, rock would start coming down, before we had a chance to get it timbered up and the roof bolted, we roof bolted it later. That was about the worst thing.

Q: There were no explosions?

BP: Not since I've been there. They used to have an odd little 'blowout' when coal would blow out gas. It was really bad at that at #3 mine. They had to 'shoot' off shift because it was too dangerous when the mines were working. That was because, sometimes when they would shoot, it would then blow out a bunch of gas, and if you were in the mine, that would be it for you. They used to shoot off shift, like during the midnight shift, when nobody was around. It didn't happen too often.

Q: Was anybody ever serious injured or killed at work?

BP: There was a few killed – mainly from rock falls. And one guy on a locomotive got his head squeezed between the timber and the motor - Armstrong that was his name. As well, when we still had slushers, someone fell on a rope and it come up and hit him under the chin and broke his neck, killed him. But there wasn't actually that many, only about four since I've been there.

Q: What were the conditions for a welder?

LD: As far as safety goes, in the welding department, they didn't do most of the welding down in the mine. It was mostly outside work, in the maintenance shop - that's where we did all the welding. I remember one time that the mechanical miner was underground, that's the mechanical miner that digs that coal and loads it into a shuttle car. Something broke on this miner, and one of the bosses wanted us to go down there and weld, but we refused. We told him, if you come and stand right beside us while we're working, we'll go down there. Right away that idea was cancelled out, and they didn't force us to go

down there. I'll never forget that one. But as far as welding goes, it was all strictly in the maintenance shop or out in the field. As well, on the trestle if there was some welding to be done, and we'd go out there and do the welding out there - but never underground, because it was just too dangerous. Arc and methane gas - and everything that goes with it. Therefore, the safety, it was okay. As far as the pay goes, for those times, the wages were pretty good for a welder. We made pretty good. I can't remember the exact wages we were getting, but I can remember that they were fairly good.

Q: Do you remember the company store when it was still around?

LD: Before I even started in mine, I remember that my dad and mom did all our shopping at the company store. I remember that song, "I owe my soul to the company store" - well that pretty well describes my dad. I'll never forget that. I remember when he went to get his paycheque at the mine office. When I got older, he sent me there one time, and when I asked the man behind the wicket, he handed me my dad's paycheck. On the bottom it had 4 'wagon wheels'; they were zeros. There was no money in the packet, because the company store took it all. On other occasions, there'd be 25 cents or whatever. That's all he got in his paycheque because the rest went to the company store.

Q: Why did people shop at the company store?

LD: They shopped there because it was the only place that was around in those days, outside of Marres store. The company store - that was Mr. Fowler's at that time, and Charley Skates' store. Then as I got older, when I started in the mine, they had his pictures on the wall; Billy Sharuk and Shine Verushka. Everybody seemed to deal at the company store, because it was the only place around. When my dad was working in the mine, there were no cars around, no vehicles, so we couldn't go anyplace else. Nobody had cars, so we had to do all of our shopping here.

Q: Do you remember the company store at all, Bill?

BP: Yep, it was there when I come, and I shopped there. I also shopped at Marris - shopped both places. The prices were as good as any place else, I guess. They used to sell nice meat at the company store.

LD: If you wanted a steak for barbeque, that was the place to go. They offered a special cut for the miners.

Q: Was the work steady?

BP: When I first came out here, I worked pretty steady all the time, so there was no problem there. But before that, there were periods when I didn't work.

LD: Yes, before that, when I was a kid yet, my dad used to tell all of us to listen for the whistle in the morning or in the evening. If it blew one long one, there would be work next day. But if it blew three short ones, there would be no work next day. I remember him saying that there were quite a few days when the whistle was blown three times, meaning that there was no work next day. Everybody used to wait for that in the evening.

Q: So how did you get through those times?

LD: Being a kid, I didn't remember that much about it. I found out long afterwards that it was really tough on mom and dad. There were 10 of us in the family, and it was very

tough, very tough. I remember asking for two bits to go to a movie show in the afternoon, because they had a movie theatre here. For two bits you could get into the show and buy some popcorn and a pop, but there were times when it was tough to get those two bits.

BP: I don't remember the hard times here, but I remember them at home on the farm during the '30s. Then, it was real tough. I remember it being that way until the War, and then after the War it got a little better.

Q: What it was like to be a miner here compared to what it was like to be a miner in the East Coulee area.

BP: It was a lot different. Down there in East Coulee, it was mechanized, they had machines there, it was a flat seam too and therefore, it was a lot easier working. It was mechanized too, they had machines, but when I first came here, they didn't have anything like that; it was just all hard work, working with a pick and shovel?

We would be working up on the pitch. We had to drill holes and 'shoot' them. If it's not steep enough for the coal to fall by itself, they had a pan line going up, and you shoveled the coal into this pan line. It was a lot of hard work. Then after a man named Dillingham took over, then they became more mechanized. Then they got the slushers in, and it was a lot easier work then. We made more money too.

Q: Describe the kind of conditions you worked in.

LD?: The seams varied anywhere from 6 to 16 feet deep. But no matter what, it was tough work, very tough for the miners. They had to pack all those timbers, they had to notch the timbers up onto the posts and then put the posts going across to hold the roof up. Then they had to slab in behind so the coal wouldn't come down on them. It was very tough. I remember when I first started in the mine, I was a pipe fitter and had to go underground to give the miners air so they could drill. I remember a lot of the miners shoveling the coal three or four times over just to get it into a car. That was tough work. They used to use a #16 shovel, that's one of those big shovels, and with these, they used to shovel it four or five times to get it to the car, and then after that, shovel it into the car. You got paid by the ton, so the more you loaded, the more money you made - whether you shoveled it once or 16 times.

Miners weren't paid by the hour, they were paid by the tonnage, whatever they did. The pay for putting in timber was separate, and coal was worth so much a ton. If you had rock mixed in, you got paid for all that too. You got paid for all the slabs you put up on the rib, and all the posts you got paid for, all the shims - but it was really tough work.

Q: Do you have any personal story that tell us what it was like to be a miner?

LD: This is a funny one. When I was a pipefitter underground, like I told you before, I had to put the 1" pipe in there for the miners so they could have air when they drilled. Then when you came down the slope, or what they call the gangway, or a crosscut, you had to run a 1" pipeline in there so they could drill too. Sometimes the posts weren't straight, so you'd have to put an elbow here and an elbow there to get around the posts. These guys were surprised that I never got stuck, and after that they called me 'Swing Joint'. I'll never forget that. That was my name to this day, they still call me, some of the fellows that are left, they still call me 'Swing Joint'.

Q: Did the miners get along pretty well with each other, like when you got together at the end of the shift to wash up?

LD: We all went together to the washhouse, and we washed each other's back, because they would be filthy - especially the miners, after they had been digging coal all day. Then, they all used to go to the bar after, up to the Canmore Hotel or the Canmore Legion. This was especially true for the afternoon shift crew. They'd finish at 11:30 or 12, and I still remember my father-in-law, and me going in there with them, but I didn't go that often. They used to have the beer on the table waiting for us to walk in. It was draft beer, and we used to just tip them back after a long day at work. We'd start at 8 o'clock, and work 8 till 4, so we were usually pretty tired.

BP: I can remember that everybody got along pretty good. They'd come in the bar, and there'd be a lot of arguments in the bar. As they used to say, there was more coal mined in the bar than there was in the mines. But everybody got along good. The only place to be was in the hotel or the Legion.

Q: What memories do you have about the trade union?

BP? The Union was pretty good out here. We belonged to United Mine Workers of America, and they negotiated a new contract every year or two. They always got us raises. They all the time went for a bit more money, and they usually got it. We didn't go on strike though, because we got things settled before that. At one time all the mines were affiliated, and by the time the end came, each mine local negotiated its own contracts.

It was the same union in East Coulee, the UMWA.

Q: And what do you remember about the union?

LD: Bill pretty well explained it all. Every two years or whatever the contract came up, we negotiated. It was fairly good. We never had any serious problems, compared to what you hear about nowadays.

Q: We live in Alberta, which is a pretty anti-union province. Weren't there some people who felt you were throwing away your money by giving it to the union?

BP: No, I think the general feeling was that the union did good for us. If it wouldn't have been for the union, we wouldn't have had the money that we did make.

Q: But the union didn't do anything about the working by the piece, right?

LD: Well that's what the union worked for, isn't that right, Bill? Every time you came up to a contract, the miners would ask for so much more for putting the timber up or putting ribs up. They'd bring it to the company and the company would negotiate.

Q: They had pretty good relations with the boss here?

LD: Yes. The good part of it was that everybody helped one another. The miners would see to it, if you're a union guy and you seen somebody in trouble, you'd go and give him a hand. There was never a grievance put in that way. Everybody helped one another, which was really good.

BP: There was some trouble in some other mines; I guess it depended on who the owner was. I heard around Drumheller when the unions were first coming in there used to be a lot of trouble.

LD: That must've been in the '20s or '30s; that was before our time. They had machine guns out there and everything, the companies did. They had a hard time getting a union, because the companies were determined that they didn't want the union.

But the company here got along well with the union. Once the union got in, they had no choice. Just like anything nowadays, same thing. The company and union bargain. The union wants this and the company doesn't want to pay this, which you probably heard from Brooks.

Q: Then the coal industry here started to go downhill. Tell me about that period of time.

BP: It seemed like rumors were going around for a long time that when Dillingham came here, they wanted to shut the mine down. When we opened the mine at Riverside, they spent a lot of money in there. They got new machinery and put a belt line down and everything. It seemed like they just wanted to show that they were losing money. So they went down, and it was a poor seam of coal anyway, that they couldn't make it pay. So finally they just shut everything down. They said they had run out of coal. That was it.

Did the miners believe that? I'd say no.

BP: I think if they wanted to they could've went after coal.

LD: The coal's there.

Q: What year was that?

LD: I think it was 1972 when Dillingham took over, or it could've been a bit earlier. But right after that, that's when things changed. Everybody started talking about how Dillingham had really bought it for the property. I think Pocklington was involved in this in some way. He bought the land afterwards, after Dillingham left. Then wanted it just for what it is right now, which is the Two Sisters development that took over. That's what they were planning for all along.

We started hearing rumors in about '72, and then every year after that, it was going a bit further. They kept saying that it's not going to last much longer. It was in the Canmore *Miner* paper that Ed Fisher was putting out before. Nobody really believed it could all end. We all said, it'll never happen, the mine will never shut down. I heard a lot of guys say that, it'll never shut down.

I remember on that Friday the 13th, July 1979. I was supposed to be on afternoon shift. I came down to work and they had a house down there before you entered into the mine property. I was stopped there and told, "That's it, the mine's shut down". They said, "You go in there, you take all your personal stuff, and you get out." Nobody will ever forget that.

Q: So you just found about it that one morning when you came there?

LD: Ya, it came out of the blue. I mean, there were some guys that knew about it, like the foremen; they probably knew about it a little sooner than we did. Then right after that,

after they shut it down, they started dismantling everything. They said, "We don't want nothing left here resembling a mine. Nothing." Why they did that, I have no idea.

BP: Well that's what they've got now. You can't tell that there was ever a mine out there. Where the mine was, there's just a slag pile there, rock. They didn't put anything there yet. Where that lamp house was, that's all that's standing there.

LD: After that, they got rid of everything. Just before they got started getting rid of everything, like the little engines you see around, somebody was asking, "Hey what's going on here?" But by then it was too late, they'd let everything go. It was too late to bring it all back. Then someone people started saying that they've got to do something, we can't let this just end like this. But by that time, it was too late; all of the things we would've wanted to keep were gone already. Then some people started realizing, we've gotta do this and we gotta do that, and this is what we've got now.

Q: You mentioned that Peter Pocklington was putting money into this change.

BP: Ya, Pocklington bought the land from Dillingham. He bought it for development. He first started up at Rundview, that's where he first started building. Then he apparently went broke.

LD: Well we all know what happened to him. So I guess that this business all fell through, and then the Three Sisters development company stepped in. Now you see what we've got where the mine use to be. All you see now are \$4 million houses.

BP: I was up there yesterday, I just drove up, and you wouldn't believe how many buildings and duplexes and condos and big houses there are up there.

LD: Worse yet, right now, they don't want any single family homes. We were actually told this, that they don't want any single family homes. It's like I live in an old house that was built by Canmore Mines. We moved it from where the mine was up to where we are now. They don't want any more of those. There's a big duplex right next to me, and there's one due to be going up on the other side of me any time soon now. They don't want any single family houses like mine - they're pushing us out. They want a community for the tourists. They want weekend homes...

Q: When you came to work out there that morning and found that you didn't have a job anymore, what did you think. Describe your reaction.

LD: We were all pretty well stunned. We said, "It can't be - no way!" The mine company didn't give you any notice - none. And there was lots of people saying that, everybody thought it was soon going to be a ghost town after, because there were hardly no jobs around. Then after the months went by, people started going to Banff Springs and the Fine Arts, and places like that. Then that's when I went to Ekshaw. Several of the guys went to Ekshaw, and several others went to work in Banff.

BP: That's when they started working on the Kananaskis project that Loughheed started. They took a lot of men over there to work; they took the miners first, we were all given the first chance to go.

Q: How well did they do by you otherwise? What did they do to help you out?

BP: They did a little bit.

LD: Well they gave us the sale of the union hall. Each person got...

BP: That wasn't the company, though.

LD: Oh no, not the company, no.

BP: The miners got something, but the ordinary guys outside, we never got nothing.

LD: Didn't they give us a week or 2 extra pay or something? I guess not.

Q: How many years of service did you have by that point?

LD: I had 19 then.

BP: Twenty one.

Q: And you didn't get a severance package?

LD: We never got nothing. All we got was the sale of the union hall, everybody got something for the sale of the union hall, which still stands. That's all.

They had a pension fund, but that was only for the miners though.

BP: There wasn't enough money in there to have a pension, so they just paid us off whatever was in there.

Q: So you're not getting a pension from Dillingham?

BP: Oh no. I'm getting a bit from the money that was in there. You couldn't take it cash if you were over 45; the government took control of it. So I'm still getting a pension of \$88 a month. That's what I got for 35 years working in the mines.

Q: Anything else you can tell me about the situation of miners? What was community life like when the mine was running?

LD: Like I said before, it was a community in which everybody helped one another. They built the hospital, that was before my time. They built the hospital, they built the arena, they built the curling rink. The miners put up the union hall. The mine put in artificial ice after that in the rink. The company also did lots for the community. All the kids used to wait for Christmas, when they'd all go to the union hall and Santa would come and give everybody a present, all the kids. It was a small community, it could be done in those days. That when Canmore Mines had it, that's before Dillingham took over. That's when I was a kid, that I can remember.

Q: Whereas you came in 1960. What kind of community was it then?

BP: We had a lot of fun, because you knew everybody. It was a town of about 2000 people. We used to go to hockey games and everybody knew each other.

LD: Oh the hockey games were something out of this world. Man, parties and going to the hotel... It was really a hockey town. That's when they used to be called the Canmore Briquettes. That's when they used to have the Big Six. I can't remember some of the teams that were in there, but the rink used to be loaded to the rafters. They even used to shut the mine down for the playoff games, so everybody could go to the hockey game. It was just loaded.

BP: Some good players come out of here, that played in the NHL.

LD: Andy Cherkawsky, Steve Jerwa, quite a few from here.

Q: Was Canmore more like a family town, where people would stay one generation after another?

LD: My father came from Poland, but he worked in Bankhead. Then from Bankhead he came to Canmore. All of us, every one of us boys, worked in the mine. There was two of us that went before the mine shut down, they moved before that. But all of us took a turn in the mine, and there was 2, no 3 of us left when the mine shut down. I got married and has a family?

Q: Are they going to stay here?

LD: No, my boy and girl are both gone away, one's in Calgary and one's in Vancouver now. I found out there's a lot of people who just can't afford it here. It's getting just too expensive to live here. For them to buy a house in Canmore is just impossible - so they move away.

BP: I got a wife and 3 children, twin boys and a girl. They're all married now and on their own, and they've all moved out of town.

Q: How has the community changed between then and now? What's different about Canmore today?

LD: They say you can't stop progress, which is true. And that's where Canmore is right now; Canmore is just blooming. I don't even know how to explain it. We love it here. I was brought up here, we got our house, and we're staying here, we're not going anyplace. It's hard to move at our age, to get up and go someplace. Besides, where are we going to go?

But Canmore is getting to the point now where they're catering to the rich people. That's my personal opinion. They come from Britain, they come from New England, and they got houses over here, because their money is so much more than ours. And there's lots from Calgary, Edmonton, all over the world. That \$4 million house that's down in the old Cairns Mine, I don't know if you've seen that opening where the Cairns is. You've never been to the Cairns. You can look at it today. But that \$4 million home, that's just a show home right now. It's somebody from New England or Germany, I can't remember now. But it's just a summer home for them.

BP: There's lots of million dollar homes around here. There was a million dollar lot sold there at that Cairns on the Bull.

LD: At the Cairns, every one of those lots is over \$1 million, just for a lot.

Q: How is the change affecting you?

BP: Well it's about the same as Leon was saying; it's bigger, there's way more stuff. There is more things around here in Canmore now, but I liked it better before. Too late to move now, too old. It's a good place, because you're only an hour away from Calgary, if you have to go to Calgary for doctors or hospital or anything like that.

LD: But they're all coming here now anyway.

BP: Ya, we've got good doctors here and everything.

LD: We're getting everything here now, so pretty soon we won't have to go to Calgary.

Q: Do you remember when they first planned the expansion across the highway, there was quite a fuss from environmentalists.

BP: They're still fighting over that wildlife and stuff there, up at Three Sisters. But it still goes ahead, money talks.

Q: Do you notice a difference with the wildlife?

LD: Oh ya, we used to walk our dog, we used to go up to the Nordegg Center even before the Nordegg Center was there. We never saw a bear or nothing. Now look what's happening. The bears are coming right down in here, they're coming right down into town. The elk and the deer? Before you could go in the bush anyplace. I remember when the mine was going, we could go and pick raspberries up at #3, and we never saw a bear. Now they're all over. We're invading their property where they used to be. Now there's all houses and everything's expanding up to where they used to be.

BP: A lot of elk come here, I've seen herds of them. They don't know where to go. They're on the road, but they don't know which way to go cuz traffic coming this way and that. Finally they get across into the bush, but they just don't know where to go. Too much traffic and all that.

Leon Dygras talks to Gereluk - On Tour to Cairns Mine and Wash-House

Q: Explain what this is over here, Leon. [pointing to trees by the road and around the Cairns Mineshaft]

LD: If you see all the falling trees here, it's because they thinned out everything here. They made room for the road and the houses below us here, and that's why you get all the trees falling over all the time. They falling over because they're taking away some of the protection, they're taking the trees out and thinning everything out. The wind is knocking them over.

Q: You said your going to take me to the Cairns Mine. Where is the Cairns Mine?

LD: The Cairns Mine is just over here about 100 yards. [pointing across the road] This is the one of the openings from the old Cairns Mine. This is before my time. I wasn't even born yet when this was running, but I was told about it from my father. After the mine shut down, this is when the Three Sisters corporation did all this work to make an opening for this new housing development. This is why it's called the Cairns on the Bow.

Q: Is that what the opening to the mine would've looked like originally? [pointing to the shaft]

LD: Yes, only without the centre posts. All the rest would've been the same, and then you'd have tracks going down to the bottom, wherever the shaft went. They'd have tracks to bring the empties down and bring the load back out again with a hoist.

Q: You mentioned what hard work they had to do putting up the timbers. Is that what the timbers would look like, would they be that size?

LD: Exactly. That's on the entrance, because they had to make it really safe. But underground they would be a bit smaller than those ones on top. But those upright ones would be about the same size as that. How far apart the timbers would be put inside the mine would vary depending on what the roof was. If the roof was really sturdy, they'd be further apart - I'm not sure how far apart, but maybe 3 feet apart.

They'd haul the timbers down with the 'slusher', or if they had the rails going down on the cars, they'd ship them down on the cars to the bottom. A slusher is on a cable going each way, so that it can reverse this way and that way.

Q: And the slusher is what they used to bring the coal out?

LD: No, the slusher is what the miners used to bring the coal from the face to the pan line or to where the miners could shovel it into the cars.

Q: We're looking here at the opening of the mine. Would this be about how big it was originally?

LD: Exactly, yes. It would just be going down at this kind of angle? The timbers used to come from a sawmill, I forget the name. But they used to haul truckloads in. They were all different sizes. There are places in the mine where the timbers were put just 3 feet apart?

Q: And you still had rock falls?

LD: No, the rock falls came after this, when they started 'roof bolting'. After that, they wouldn't put in timbers; they used roof bolts instead. When they were really going into a place, they they'd put timbers in too, but when the roof was really solid, they'd use the roof bolts. It was not as heavy work. They used to drill a hole and put the roof bolt in. This way here they have to notch all their timbers, put all the timbers up, which is really hard work.

Q: Explain the steps where the coal came from the coal face out to here, and then what would happen after it came here?

LD: At the coal face, once the miners drilled a hole, then the fire boss went in and 'shoot' the holes that they'd drilled with the powder. The fire boss would go shoot it, and after the dust settled, the miners would go back in and load the loosened coal into a pan line, or else they'd shovel it into the little mine cars which were in the gangway on a track. Then the pan line would take the coal to the cars and it would load onto the little cars. When all the cars were loaded, usually the miners loaded about 10 cars at a time, the little compound motors would take it all out the gangway up the slope. This is what you call a slope [pointing to entrance]. The hoist outside would let the rope rider come down with 10 empties, go down to the bottom of the gangway, drop those 10 empties off, and hook onto the 10 loads and bring the 10 loads outside. Then from there they'd go on an electric trolley to the tibble where the coal was processed. The tibble is where we're going now; it's by the lamp house for #3 Mine which was a couple of miles away, the way that it used to go to the tibble. It was all on a track.

Q: Then at the tibble what happened?

LD: At the tipple, the coal got dumped into a processor where they'd process it into slag and make briquettes, or else they'd have lump coal, which they'd ship out just in lumps.

Once it got to the tipple again, it got crushed into slack, and then they made briquettes. That was in the earlier days. Then after that it was just slack, which they'd ship to Japan. It was high quality coal.

Q: You miners got paid by the tonnage you produced?

LD: Don't forget now, I wasn't a miner. I worked underground. I was a welder, but I worked underground before I became a welder. That's when I was underground, that's what I know, where the coal went and how it was processed.

The miners were paid by the ton of coal, how much they loaded. Then they got paid for the timber, how many timbers they put up.

The company shipped everything off. They took everything out of the mine. Whenever they shot a round after the miners drilled, they loaded whatever they could. They'd try to load as much as they could, because that's what they got paid for.

The rock that they pick out of the coal, what they called the picking table. The coal went through and there was somebody there picking the rocks out. They had big slag piles down from where the tipple was. They had several of them going out, but you won't see any today, because they've all been moved away to make room for the housing developments.

Q: We're just a few yards around from the mine shaft we were at, the Cairns Mine shaft. Why is this housing development called 'Cairns on the Bow'? [pointing to a large house across the road from the preserved mine shaft]

LD: That's the name they gave to this. They call it Cairns Landing, but they call it Cairns on the Bow because the Bow is just on the other side of that house down below. This is a \$4 million house, a one family dwelling. These are all \$1 million lots, and more. This is the one that's finished now. There's another one in process of being built, which is not finished yet, and you can't see it from here. There aren't any miners buying these houses?

Q: Is this what's happening to Canmore today?

LD: Right.

[Interview moves to abandoned #3 Mine, about one mile down the road]

Q: I'm looking at an old piece of cement and steel. What is this structure right here? [pointing back up the hill above the lamp house]

LD: That's something that came before my time. It used to be a steam hoist for hauling coal out of #2 mine, which was to my right over here down further.

Q: And up there, is that where the coal used to come down from the tipple?

LD: That's after this steam hoist was shut down. Before that, they had a tunnel going in through the bank over here. They used to haul the coal down from #5 mine and the

dumped it into a chute and it landed on a belt and ran into the tippie, where it was processed. The tippie was all right here. [points to the left]

Q: Are we looking at some of the waste coal and some of the waste rock?[points to rock pile below the lamp house.]

LD: Yes, all this is all waste rock here. There's rock and slag and everything in there.

Q: Explain what the building is over there. [pointing to a derelict stone building a little higher up the mountainside]

LD: That's the old lamp house. That's where the miners picked up their lamps to go underground. That's where all the lamps were charged, and all the miners picked them up and put on their hardhats and went underground. Then when they came back out of the mine, they had to drop them off there again to get recharged for the next day. Right along this bank here was the maintenance shop. It went right back to just about where the lamp house is. That's where we did all our welding, all our lathe work, turning down the big wheels for the compounds, things like that.

This is where I worked, did my work for #2 mine. That's a little car, that's what the miners used to load once 'shot' had loosened the coal. [pointing to little rail car inside the entrance to #3 mine] 8 or 10 of these would come out at one time. Right next to the car you can see the bull wheel. That's where the cable used to come down from the hoist, used to go around the bull wheel to let the cars down. These are lamps the miners used to go underground. This is what they used. The cable used to come off the top and go to their hardhat, and this is what they used all day while they were working shoveling coal, putting timber up. This went around their belts like this. Then the cord from there came up to their hardhat, and they'd turn the light off and on. They'd pack this all day long while they were working.

Q: Now we're standing outside this sturdy structure that you called the lamp house. What happened inside there?

LD: This is where they recharged all the batteries, the red batteries that you just saw the picture of from down below. The miners came down here from the washhouse and came through this gate to pick up their lamps. Then they went down on the other side of this lamp house and punched their clock or put their check on a board to show that they're here. After that they came up here and caught the trolley that would take them to #4 mine, or else catch a bus on top the hill to go to #5 or #3 mine. When they finished the shift they'd come back down here, they'd come through where the rail is, drop their lamps off. The lamp man used to take the lamps and put them on the charger. Then they'd come here after they dropped the lamps off, go down this trail over here, and go down the bottom of the hill and go to the washhouse.

That's the walk, where the trolley came for the coal coming from #2 mine. There used to be a trestle here going to the tippie.

Q: So the men all would shower at the end of the day?

LD: In the wash house, at the bottom of the hill, yes. But, it's not there anymore.