Interview Mr. W. S. (Bill) Lavery May 9,1972
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Came to Cobalt in 1914 it was a going concern . My mother ran a boarding house on 9 bedrooms, 4 living rooms plus a bedroom downstairs, on Swamp St. and they had electric nob & two wiring system. In those days you had day sleepers and night sleepers she had about 30 or 40 men living in house. She would make up beds & men slept in the daytime. She had 4 girls working for her giving meals about 50 men and lunches too. The story goes that this was a swamp. Houses were a real concern. I can remember going up the street and there were crowds of people loading each house. They were heated with Quebec heaters, with box stoves, 3 heaters and cook stove, & one on landing. It was very cold. Water would be frozen. An old fellow who had a thick beard woke up one morning and it was frozen to the covers. Cannon Simms house on our street had a bar in it. There were no hotels just blind pigs.

House was torn down in 1937-38 the fellow who tore it down was a Reeve of the Township. He found a 26 of scotch in the partition of the house. Moved to New Liskeard in 1929 I worked for a Mrs. E. Sewell in jewellery store Took my apprenticeship training with him. Then in stock market crash 1929. He went broke and had to close up the store. I didn't have any money to buy and went and rented a six by six Edwards Agency with my last weeks pay, $22.50. The best store of New Liskeard at this time was paid $25. a week. 50 hours week regular. When I started out for myself-60 hours a week.

We opened up March 15, 1931 and I was there gradually kept renting more space from him in 1936 from there moved up to Whitewood into Spencers March 15,1942. Built this place in March 15, 1942 operated on leases this is why the 15th. I remember the night of Haileybury fire, my brother and I were selling papers, The Nugget, we used to sit on this pillar in the Hunter Block. It was getting colder & darker we dashed home. I was 12, he was 13 or 14. She took us to Station and the box cars were full up with people. The wind changed and fire started going in different directions. Went back home. People were sleeping all over houses in blankets on the floor. Some families had four or five in them. We had lots of food because of the boarding house. She bought cases of food. Things were not readily available there, we had enough food to last a week or ten days. My mother died last Dec. she lived to be 87. She was a very hard worker. She used to sit and slice loaves and loaves of bread. She had up to 20 lunch boxes to pack.

There was a hospital just a wooden frame building where Buffams is now. I remember Dr. Mitchell. He had a nurse Miss Kennedy, she was a wonderful person I had my tonsils taken out and mother took me in the car. He had a leather covered bench chair, he used for operating. He did this right there. The front door was a panel affair in one corner there was a little passage so Dr. and nurse could come & go freely. We always thought of it as a secret passage. The building next to it was a drug store. You could go through this passage into it. I think our education facilities now are too elaborate. I thing for us while it was inadequate but now it is over. When you think back to all the famous men who came from one room schools I really think they did a better job comparing their advantages. Somebody remarked to me yesterday our present premier W. Davis under him the price has skyrocketed. They talk about bringing the children to a central area. They all have to be bused when you cram 20 to 30 kids in a bus, its as bad a life as a dog's. We used to walk. Kids are on the bus 1 to 1½ hrs. and they don't see their parents much in the day.

I would not like to see anything as an individual (we are living beyond our means) as I don't know what goes on behind the scenes such as giving money to nations is not doing any good. But the millions of dollars that our foreign affairs office dishes out really irks me. I think we are approaching a welfare state and we can't afford it. It i quite obvious that people are better off on welfare than one working and paying taxes. I think kids are better off our working for things than giving them it.

I have an old coal scuttle that mother used for the stoves. We made our own entertainment, we had a YMCA a Mr. St. anford Hall was in charge of it. We went 2 a week to picture shows. We play hide & go seek every Sat. there were organized ball games on the slimes. We used to play around the fourth of July, shaft, fishing, hunting. Swimming back of Coney as we got older and could swim better we learnt to survive at the time. We used to go to Short Lake to swim dressed and undressed behind the bush. Boy Scouts and we worked. In those days every boy had some kind of job to work at, splitting wood etc. We used to bring in a wooden box filled with kindling. She burned a box every morning and kept the coal in lard pails. We had about fifteen of these 20 lb. pails besides the scuttles. We had the pleasure of washing dishes, cleaning tables sometimes washing floor, and no garden because of grounds. I feel that the entire area is basically in a steady but modern increase but I think tourism would help. I would like to see if possible an industry that would not use up the natural resources. Tourism is one of the best to get involved. The area from New Liskeard south to Cobalt an ideal spot for tourists. I would like to see this new project that they are talking about go into Lorraine Valley so they could use the facilities right there but Temiskaming

has gone as far as it can go.

As far as I'm concerned I think there is as good a future here as there is anywhere in Canada. Its a healthy environment up to now its been a "we haven't". Its a good place to raise a family less problems than any of the big centers. Having grown up in a mining camp and talking to people from cities I think we have had a much more rounded up bringing than one can get here.