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Amelia Cook:the Port Hood Explosion Amelia Cook: February 7th, 1908. Really and truly, I was only 5 years old, but I kind of believe it was a Wednesday. I'm not sure.- But I remember it so well because that morning the wind was in east and there were great big flakes of snow--Cape Breton snowflakes are bigger than around here (Guysborough)--they were awfully big, anyway, big as the palm of your hand. You've seen that wet snow. And it filled the window all full of blisters • we used to call it blisters • covered with snow on the window. How I remember so well. Daddy went to work that morning and Mama had a big washing out, and the wind came in and blew all the clothes off the line. She said to me, "Amelia, I've got to go out and pick them up." It wasn't daylight yet. She took the table and she pushed it over by the window and put the lamp on it so she could see outdoors to pick up her clothes--they blew all over the place. I kept watching her and watching her, and after awhile she came in • I shouldn't tell you this probably--but she had Daddy's un? derclothes. And years ago, you know, there were no combinations • there were just drawers and shirts--they were froze... she'd spread them apart and they'd stand up. She spread the drawers' legs apart like that and said, "Look, Amelia, a man with no head on him." And I remember that as well as anything. Anything to make us laugh. Then she moved the table to the next win? dow and went out to pick up more clothes • they were even stuck against the wire fence of the railroad. And it was snowing. And she just got in, started putting the clothes in the tub to thaw out, and this tap came on the window, and here it was Joe Porter, our next door neighbour. It was about 7 o'clock then. I can see that big grey mitt in the window. He pulled the snow down off the window • and he said, "Laura, Laura, there's an explosion in the pit and it's on Da's side. I'm going over to tell Nell." Mama said, "You stay here. You go over and tell Nell, she'll want to go to the pit. They've got trouble enough at the pit." But Mama couldn't keep him. Over he goes and boy, it wasn't two min? utes or probably a little more, over comes Nell in her cotton nightdress and her bare feet in that deep snow • she was going to the pit. Poor Mama had an awful time try? ing to get her peacified to stay. So a little after daylight one of our neighbours went on horseback to the pit, and he came back and told Mama that Mr. Peterson (Amelia's father) and Mr. Porter were all right • because they were shifted. When they went to work that morning. Papa was transferred to another place • him and Tom Porter • three of them were to be work? ing together, the two and this John Camp? bell. The explosion went off on the side Daddy was supposed to be on, but just this day he was on the other side of the pit. That's how he and Tom Porter got saved. But poor Daddy, when he was getting out of the rake that morning, he said to John Campbell, "I'll see you tonight, John." And John said, "All right, Alex, I'll see you tonight." And Papa said, when he got back to the explosion, the first man he picked up was John Campbell. And he had his can (piece can) still over his shoul? der. And Papa said, first thing he thought of, "I'll see you tonight, John." CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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