

# NELS KONNERUP AND WILLIAM DOUGLASS

Interview conducted by Ann Kain  
and Logan W. Hovis  
National Park Service  
June 12, 1994  
Tape #1  
Side #1

**Kain:** *June 12, 1994. Kennicott Glacier Lodge. Interview with Nels Konnerup and William Douglass. Interviewers are Logan Hovis and Ann Kain of the NPS. Logan do you want to take the lead?*

**Hovis:** *Certainly. I know you - both of you have a lot of memories of the place that pertain to how you grew up here and the friendships you formed here. You made that quite evident last night. And a lot of information that is harder to get at is how the place worked. How the people that worked in the mill or in*

*the mines worked. What they did. We have a good idea of what they did in the bunk houses, but I'm curious what they did when they were around the machinery. How they worked the machinery. You worked in the mill a little bit at certain times.*

**Konnerup:** *Very little in the mill but...*

**Hovis:** *And on the tramway?*

**Konnerup:** *On the tramways. And also underground at the Jumbo, Erie...*

**Hovis:** *I would really like to hear what you did there. In all of the places.*

**Konnerup:** *Bill Douglass, of course, knows very well [the] administrative operations that went on here, and*

*his father was the preeminent manager of this whole operation from 1915 onward until 1929. I think I indicated last night that ... this was probably the most efficient mining company and administrative offices that I've ever encountered. And I've been fortunate to have seen mining operations in Montana, Utah, and Nevada and other places. They never worked quite as smoothly as they did here.*

*way from the foreman [who] worked in the mines and camps for Jerry and Paul Warner and others. People who worked in administrative levels in this lower camps or town.*

Hovis: *You worked there as a miner as well as in the other operations?*

Hovis: *I've read Mr. Douglass's history about the operations. It's very useful. When you worked up at the Jumbo mines, what was your position?*

Konnerup: *Either that or I had friends some who are and a geologist I traveled a little bit with, John Mercy. So I do have a comparative of ideas about what goes on in a mining town operations. I don't like to call this a mining camp because it was a mining town. It was a friendly sort of place. Very unusual in my opinion. And I think the good deal of it leads to Bill Douglass's father and the men he hired in the administrative positions. And that goes all the*

Konnerup: *Well, I happened to be able to muck, as they say, from both sides. And there was a contract operation between going from Jumbo to Erie and the crew was two miners and two muckers. And they all happened to be Finns except me. And they didn't [have] another Finn who could muck on both sides. I got a temporary position and that was 1934. And price of copper was going up probably because of the imminent war situation. And I think they were thinking of taking more out of the there and bringing it to the Jumbo tram area, rather than over the side of the hill down along the glacier.*



*Which was a very practical solution. So that's the only experience I had underground.*

Hovis: *Did you help with the drill setup?*

Konnerup: *No. Just mucking.*

Hovis: *Just mucking.*

Konnerup: *They were traditional liners - the [type of] pneumatic hammers [that] were set up. And the miners put 14 feet of steel into the face. As soon [as] they drew that out we went in and mucked it in the cars.*

Hovis: *Then you drill fire and muck around each shift.*

Konnerup: *Yes, the fire. We wait for dust to settle then we start mucking. That was my only experience underground except going down the stopes and looking around. Bonanza was, I think, about 3200 feet deep. The deepest shaft in the mining operation. There was a communication between the Motherlode and the Bonanza and communication between the*

*Jumbo and Eric being developed. Then I had the good fortune to take a job riding line on the aerial tramways. Jack Morris, the foreman, the time being (unintelligible) job I was too young, but he decided that if I wanted it bad enough I could handle it.*

Hovis: *What would you do in that job?*

Konnerup: *Well, that was riding up and down the line watching for problems that developed in the towers and the saddles and cables. And keeping all of the gear on the line greased. It was a mean job in the winter and [a] beautiful job in the summer.*

Hovis: *You get quite intimately involved with the latches that hold the top cars onto the cables.*

Konnerup: *Oh, yes. Occasionally there would be an accident in that area and some buckets got away and crashed. And generally, you have a splicing job to do on the cables. And then we did the splicing in place with a platform across the*



*Jumbo tramline.*

*main lines and pulled the cables together and spliced them. And it was generally a burry-up job because that mill depended on the tramways and it cost a lot of money to shut that mill down. The objective was to keep as much ore on the top side as you could in case of an interruption in the tramway.*

**Hovis:** *When you would do maintenance on the towers, would you walk up to them or would you ride the buckets and jump off?*

**Konnerup:** *Ride the buckets and jump off.*

**Hovis:** *How old were you?*

**Konnerup:** *Seventeen, when I started.*

**Hovis:** *How old were you when you finished?*

**Konnerup:** *I worked two years here before I left. But it was considered a little more dangerous than some jobs. There was a few people over the years in the tramway operations. I thought it was perfectly safe.*

**Hovis:** *You never missed a tower did you?*

**Konnerup:** *(inaudible sentence)*

**Hovis:** *Would you ever work in the transfer stations or the angle stations?*

**Konnerup:** *Yes, I worked at the angle station on the Bonanza side. Steve Buchanan and I, we worked two shifts and that again was designed to keep that mill running.*

**Nels' daughter:** *Tell them about the bear up at the angle station.*

**Konnerup:** *It was an increasing episode. Steve Betanal like to feed the bears and porcupines. They do get to be a nuisances. I didn't much like the idea, but Steve thought it was fine. He was on the day shift and I was on the night shift. Went on at 6:00. I was supposed to have dinner ready for him when he came off shift and I'd go on. And one day a little old black bear was sitting up there in the walkway between the tramway and the house. Steve*





*The Erie Mine Bear.*

*called over and said, "get that bear off the walkway so I can get in here." I said, "no that's your problem." I left him there and he had to run my shift for about an hour and a half. The bear finally left.*

Hovis: *You pay him for that?*

Konnerup: *So Steve never more fed the bear. (Inaudible sentence).*

Hovis: *I don't know if the snow is gone enough or not, but that house is still up there...*

Konnerup: *Yeh.*

Hovis: *In pretty good shape. I think there's a gentleman lives in it.*

Konnerup: *That's right. I'm not sure about station 3 on the Jumbo side, but...*

Hovis: *It's in good shape, too.*

Konnerup: *At one time, one winter I stayed riding line. I stayed very often at stations.*

Hovis: *You'd ride line on both tram systems.*

Konnerup: *Yeh.*

Konnerup: *And it full time job with seven days a week and eight hours a day and sometimes more. Station 3 house had a snow storm. I spent quite a lot of time on that line because there were several towers. It was very low and they had to shovel out from under the towers so the buckets didn't lift off the line. I remember one night we went to bed and there was a howling blizzard up there and in the morning, when we got up, the house was completely covered, except that window that's up about four feet. We had to crawl out through there to get to the tram lines. The Jumbo line, when I was there, the Jumbo tram only worked eight hours a day.*

Hovis: *Did you have a lot of problems - I think it is [station] number six or seven. It's a break over about half way up from the angle/transfer station to the top. There's a lot of*

*snow slides or snow guards up there now.*

Konnerup: *On the Jumbo?*

Hovis: *Yes, the Jumbo.*

Konnerup: *Just above the station 3, it was a break over tower and that was a menace. We had to keep that clear and then there was a long span below it and tower on lower side was another place. The worst snowslides in that came all in [one] time. And the same on the Bonanza side, just outside the Bonanza breakover there was a deep canyon in there.*

Hovis: *The loading station at the top of the Jumbo, that's actually in the ground, isn't it? You go into the mountain?*

Konnerup: *Yeh. There's part of the timbered tunnel. On the Bonanza side, it was right out in the open. The wind was howling and it was mighty cold in there.*

Hovis: *I was in that station last summer. I saw two places where there was heat. I assume it was a little rescue station or the foreman shack and a little place where you had a hot plate in it you used to keep the grease warm.*

Konnerup: *Yeh.*

Hovis: *That was it, wasn't it?*

Konnerup: *That was about all the heat, now. I remember very well Jack Morris, when I was riding line behind him and when the weather got real cold he would send me up to help on the Bonanza side because those chutes would freeze up. And for some reason or another Jack thought that I could keep the tram running or something. He'd send me up there to help him open that shoot. I remember having big Scandinavian, Norwegian fellow. They called him big John Wilson. He was a huge man like this man down here who pulled the cable car across.*

Kain: *George Mason.*



**Konnerup:** *But he was much more muscular. And he was so darn strong that he'd take one of those handles on that chute and it was solid steel and he'd bend it. But that would keep the muck coming down. And -I guess- one of the tricks to doing that would [be to] cut a short stick of dynamite and put a fuse on it and shove a stick up the chute and jar it loose... That would, of course, would break the caked ore away from the chute. And we'd kept it running.*

**Hovis:** *Did you do that? Did you do the powder work?*

**Konnerup:** *Yeb. Most of the fellows were a little bit afraid of dynamite.*

**Hovis:** *You rode the tram. You weren't afraid of dynamite, either.*

**Konnerup:** *But there was a trick to it. What I would do is go up very early on and load as many cars as I could, as many buckets as I could and put them all on sides tracks. So when the chutes pull up we had a reserve to keep the tram line*

*running, but it was a matter of pride as far as Jack Morris was concerned here. He didn't want to have any of those new people complaining, if they didn't have ore.*

**Kain:** *Some of the questions, I think, the two of you might be able to help us with. A lot of the other kids we've interviewed haven't had much knowledge about the jobs here or the labor disputes or anything like that. Either of you know anything about that? You, Bill, with your dad being superintendent?*

**Douglass:** *My dad originally came here as a foreman of the Bonanza mine. He came from Butte, Montana where he was chief safety engineer for Anaconda's mines there. He was just a few years out of Colorado School of Mines. And then he became, was promoted to the job of mine foreman. Which meant he could move from living at the Bonanza down to the lower town. And he visited the mines. And so he held the job of mine foreman*

for a period of some years. Not sure how many. Then became superintendent of mines. Which was, I think, the official title he held the whole time he was here. And as far as labor disputes were concerned. There was a major one and I'm not clear exactly when it happened, but it is my impression it was shortly after the end of World War I, about 1919. The mines were closed, the men refused to work for a period of time. I think that his promotion to superintendent came as a result of the successful and negotiation with the union. And exactly how the union got in there I don't [know] because it was supposed to be a company that was always anti-union. I know also that a big secret at that time [was] that the Kennecott Copper Corporation had undercover information which was supplied to management from spies or whatever you wanted to call them, who worked in the mines. Part of the understanding of what was going on there was the fact that those people, now Nels correct me about this, was my

impression that they got about \$4.00 a day for their work. And they'd work full time except for change day. How did that work Nels?

Konnerup:

They were running three shifts when the mine was going full tilt. There was a long change and a short change. Change from day shift to afternoon shift to graveyard shift. And there were two days off when you changed one of those and a half a day off when the other changed. The idea was that there was a continuation of work without interruption.

Kain:

You know what the labor - dispute was about? Was it about - was it over wages or conditions?

Douglass:

I'm sure, it was a combination of that. In the winter, as I understand it, the snow was so heavy there in the Jumbo and Bonanza you couldn't even come outside. The dining hall of Bonanza was underground and I have - you probably have pictures - I have pictures of the



*underground dining room. Which was what - level 500?*

Konnerup:

*Yeh. 500.*

Douglass:

*And essentially those men lived without seeing the outside air from the first of November to, what, the end of March? Something like that - and it was cold. From their \$4.00 a day or whatever it was \$5.00 a day, they worked their eight hours and then the company deducted something like \$30.00 a month for board and room. Wasn't that about it?*

Konnerup:

*I think it was \$20.00. At least it was when I was here. It was nominal.*

Douglass:

*It was essentially as they were essentially captives of the company, when they got up there in the fall, snow begin to fall. You couldn't get out of there and they were - none of the people were allowed to ride the bucket, except for people like Nels. In the summertime when we went through a long change, some of the more adventurous of these*

*people, would go to McCarthy and enjoy the various entertainment there. Most of it had to do with the drinks. The rule was no drinking in Kennicott. No liquor. And there was smuggled liquor. I don't know how much of that.*

Konnerup:

*That was an interesting situation as some of the bucket chasers at the lower end would put these fellows into a bucket. Most of them were quite fearful of the trip that they bunker down in that bucket and they very often had a bottle of booze in their lap. And the bucket chaser hook them on the line and reach down and grab the bottle as it went out. I'm not guilty of that.*

Hovis:

*And I assume they would take the bottle then and dispose of it?*

Konnerup:

*Of course. But drinking was a serious infraction in the mine. And they dealt with it expeditiously. It was quite easy to hand a man's paycheck and tell him that the train was leaving at such and such time and that was it.*



**Douglass:** *The train came in Wednesday and Saturday, as I recall, except in the wintertime when the snow would interrupt. We had one [gap of] 60 or 90 days.*

**Konnerup:** *Yeh. It was over six weeks, I know.*

**Douglass:** *They had a pool. Everybody would buy a chance for a dollar. Pick the day and time the first train arrived at the station.*

**Konnerup:** *They had a ribbon across the train.*

**Douglass:** *The men - as far as I knew - they were allowed to write letters. Some of the letters were censored. I'm not sure. But anyway, there was a telegraph line into the railroad station down below and the daily stock report came in through that telegraph station. And somehow or another [they] were relayed to the mine. I don't know what the system was on that. So that the man had the opportunity to invest in the stock market. And there were [a] few exceptional people who, they didn't have anything else to do, so they invested. And*

*some people made a good chunk of money and got out of there.*

**Konnerup:** *Some of them lost it all.*

**Kain:** *Their \$4.00 a day, plus.*

**Douglass:** *They also were allowed to as I say, write. Men would correspond with some of these agencies in the city who lonely women were registered with, and on more than one occasion, a women would get off a train in Kennicott asking for a man who was a miner who's been corresponding with her, who'd ask her to come here and marry him. And she was escorted to the train and sent back.*

**Kain:** *I would be if they actually had to escort. I'd figure she'd get off of the train and look around and go "what have I done!" and get back on the train.*

**Douglass:** *The life led here - where we are - for all of us, like Nels and I as kids, was so different than the people that worked up there. Working conditions underground*

were dark and they wore, half wore the carbide lanterns and [did] a lot of blasting. There were two kinds of operations, as I understand it. Some of the miners would contract with the company to drill a hole. They got paid by the...

Konnerup:

By the foot.

Douglass:

By the foot or was it - I thought that they used the measurement of rods, too. And that's where the I-did-a-rod came from. That had nothing to do with the Iditarod. They got paid so much a foot that the team of two or three accomplished. I think the whole thing through to the thing you were operating on. Wasn't that a contract operation?

Konnerup:

That was a contract operation. We got paid \$14.00 a foot [for] the whole crew. And we [were] generally given 14 foot [of] steel.

Douglass:

And how long did it take you to drive that 14 feet.

Konnerup:

It was those liners that went pretty fast in the area where we were. The geological structure was primary limestone and it is pretty easy drilling. We can make a lot of feet in a day as opposed to doing work in granite or some of the harder rock.

Douglass:

I think there was a quarrel about the company beginning to object to how much money the contractors were making. Wasn't that right?

Konnerup:

That's right. The Finns and the Welsh miners were terrific workers, and you know I can remember well, we'd go on shifts and muck out that face and get it in the cars. And not a word spoken. Mucking on the same side, then make a sound and we'd switch sides. There was no talking and you worked straight through.

Hovis:

That's a lot of rock to move. Did they blast on to a steel plate to make it easier?



Konnerup: *Most of it was blasted on to a steel plate and, of course, a lot of it is a fairly good size stuff, only pick it up and put-throw it in.*

Douglass: *Terribly heavy work.*

Konnerup: *Yeah it was. When I first started on the job, I was so tired at the end of the shift I couldn't even stay awake to eat dinner. But I ate a good breakfast.*

TAPE #1  
SIDE #2

Konnerup: *That [question of union representation was] pretty well settled long before I came up here to work in 1934 after I got out of high school. The only labor activity that I saw was some of the residual International Workers of the World, IWW. We called them "wobblies." Tried to organize again. Of course a lot of them were considered to be spies and things like that. Most of the miners didn't want to have anything to do with them and they lasted maybe two weeks if they*

*came up there, then they were out of here.*

Kain: *What was the ethnic makeup of the miners themselves? Here you had a lot of Scandinavians in administrative ... down here in the lower camp.*

Konnerup: *Most of the miners were Scandinavians, Finns or Norwegians.*

Douglass: *Cousin Jack, the Welshman. People who'd come from mining backgrounds in the so called "Old Country." A lot of them with heavy accents and...*

Konnerup: *A lot of them couldn't sign their pay checks, just make their marks.*

Kain: *So a lot of them were Welsh and Scandinavian, very similar to the make up of the people down here?*

Douglass: *I think the composition was the same at the mine pretty much as it was down here except that the people at the mines probably were less well educated than the ones*





*Left to right: Bill Douglass, Inger Jensen, Richard Osborne, Jean Douglass.*



*“I don’t like to call this a mining camp because it was a mining ‘town.’ It was a friendly sort of place.”*

NELS KONNERUP

*they'd started up there and they ended up down here.*

**Kain:** *When I was talking to the Moore sisters [Nan and Jeanne] yesterday ... their father left here and went down to Chile and married a woman from Chile. Did you have people from the mines like that? Kennecott had mines in Chile, did any of those people ever come up here?*

**Douglass:** *No, I never hear of any.*

**Konnerup:** *No, we had very few Latin people here. I think probably the weather conditions were not attractive, for one thing.*

**Douglass:** *I think the Chile operation was later in the 20s too. Most of the composition of the mine labor force were people who came in here between 1915 and 1920.*

**Kain:** *Yes. They said their father was here first, and then went down there and then came back here.*

**Konnerup:** *Well Jim Dennis, who built the aerial tramways here, built aerial tramways all over the world and he built all of those tramways for Kennecott Copper and probably some of the other companies in Latin America too. And in those days and up through the 1920s the aerial tramway was a much more common system of transporting ore than it is now, where they use rails and drill tunnels and things like that.*

**Hovis:** *Did you ever have any of the cables break on you under load?*

**Konnerup:** *There have been breaks in the running lines, when buckets bang together. But mostly it wasn't a complete break, it was a frayed cable. We'd salvage the buckets from the ground by pulling them up to the towers and loading them on. We'd set up a platform right on the wire between the towers and pull the cable together and splice it right in place. Jack Morris and the fellow that I replaced was a steeplejack, forgot to duck one day and they were task masters of high wire acts.*



**Douglass:** *As Nels says, those were considered a little more dangerous, those trips down to those towers and not only the danger from the buckets and the cables that were running all the time but the snow slide danger. One man, I can't remember his name, was working on one of those breakover towers and a snow slide swept him away, I can't remember his name, 1927 I think.*

**Konnerup:** *Yeh. I can't remember his name either.*

**Douglass:** *He was not normally supposed to be there, he was sort of a sub-foreman or something and he'd gone up to check something and he'd got too... and swept him away.*

**Konnerup:** *That was probably on the breakover from the Jumbo station.*

**Hovis:** *What did you use the telephones for that are on those breakovers?*

**Konnerup:** *To call in to stop the tram when we were working on a tower or working on a cable. We could*

*string a line from that telephone that was on the tower down to where we wanted to stop the bucket. Some of those couplings on the main lines, sometimes we would drop ropes over the side and slide down the ropes and pull those buckets up to the towers and then we'd load them on a platform and take them down for repairs. All of those buckets went into the machine shop for periodic repairs and - remember that little track that runs up from the far side of the mill, up to the tram house - all that equipment went up and down on that rail car.*

**Douglass:** *Have you ever seen the buckets? I didn't see any of them around here anywhere.*

**Konnerup:** *There some in the dump over here.*

**Hovis:** *Yes, and some of the old buckets I don't think were worth salvaging are in the scrap heap behind the machine shop. I haven't seen too many of the hangers and bells in there, though.*

- Konnerup:** *There's some over here. But they had a hook, like a bail on a bucket, and a latch that went onto the bucket and onto the frame. Those things ran right over the top of the crusher and you just flip the latch and turn the bucket over. When we were riding line, we, of course, didn't stop the tram except when we were working on the line, but if we were cutting off the tightening bolts on the towers or anything we would just jump on the tower and the same way we would jump on while it was going.*
- Kain:** *I'm surprised more people didn't get killed doing that.*
- Douglass:** *It wasn't all that slow either.*
- Konnerup:** *No, it moved fairly fast. It moved fast enough so that when you jumped off at the lower end and hit the ground you had to run a few steps before you got stopped.*
- Hovis:** *And you had your tools in your hand when you did it.*
- Konnerup:** *Either you had them over your shoulder in a sack or something.*
- Douglass:** *I can remember my father twice a week would go into the mine for an inspection and so on and so forth and he would sit at the bottom of that bucket and ride up there. On some days it was so cold. What, it took half an hour to get up there.*
- Konnerup:** *About 45 minutes.*
- Kain:** *If it's fifty below, that's cold.*
- Konnerup:** *Each of those lines was four miles long. But his father was a tremendously safety conscious man. I remember him when I was a kid. Of course he was gone when I came back and worked. He'd moved on to the states. But he always wore a hard hat and always took all of the precautions that were listed by the book. He made provisions for all the safety devices that normally would have been taken according to the Department of the Interior safety regulations.*
- Hovis:** *What were some of the safety devices at the time?*



- Konnerup: *Hard hats were available. Most miners wouldn't wear them. They wore these caps with carbide lamps on them. And I never did see a miner who wore a mask.*
- Hovis: *Fortunate here they're not drilling rock.*
- Konnerup: *There were miners that got what we called "miner's consumption" [silicosis] from time to time and ship them down to Arizona. Very often they'd have to take a collection for the fare.*
- Hovis: *Would you drill dry here, or drill wet?*
- Konnerup: *Both. Nobody paid most attention to dust or asbestos or anything else. We used a lot of asbestos.*
- Kain: *Yeah, we know. Now being removed.*
- Konnerup: *I'd help remove it. It wouldn't bother me.*
- Douglass: *It was, I would say, not having done it but I know it was an*
- excruciatingly difficult job to be a miner there and rewards were so minor. Some of those men worked there for ten or fifteen years and never got out of that routine.*
- Kain: *Do you think the conditions here were any worse than at any other mine at the time? A mine similar to this that did anything different, or was Kennecott better or worse or about the same?*
- Douglass: *Copper mining is generally safer than coal mining and things like that but my impression from sixty or seventy years looking back, I can't imagine how they could get people to do what they did. A man would come here and work here for ten or fifteen years for a net of \$80 a month and live under those circumstances.*
- Kain: *So you think it was probably as good or better here than any other place?*
- Douglass: *In Wales or Sweden.*





*Bonanza dining hall, 500 feet below ground level.*

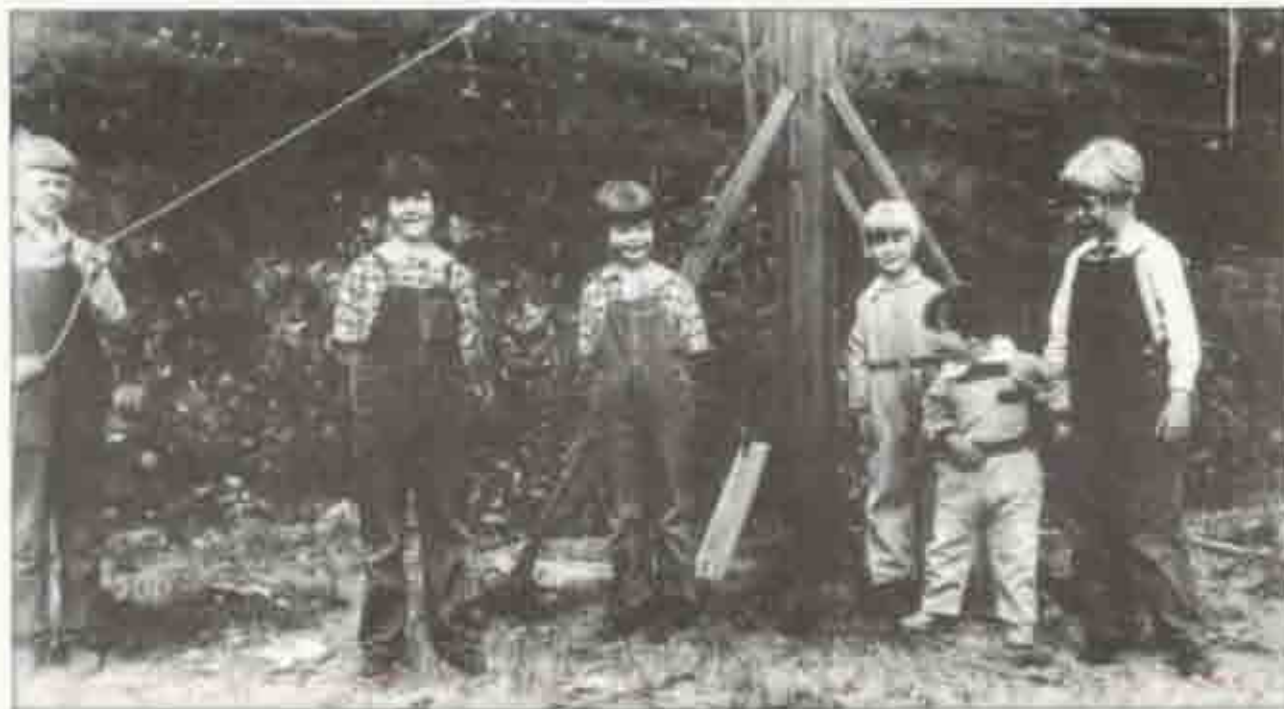


*“...essentially those [miners] lived without seeing the outside air from the first of November to...the end of March. ....and it was cold. From their \$4.00 [or] \$5.00 a day, they worked their eight hours and then the company deducted something like \$30.00 a month for board and room. ...they were essentially captives of the company”*

WILLIAM DOUGLASS

- Konnerup:** *Certainly the conditions were better than they were in West Virginia or eastern state coal mines. Unfortunately - and my father was one of those that invested pretty heavily in the stock market and didn't quite make it in 1929. So we were not very well off when I went to high school. I went to work in Seattle in a coal and ice company outfit for 10 cents an hour. I eventually got a little more than that as I went through high school. I thought \$4.25 a day was phenomenal and a lot of money to be making at that time and I [?] to work in excruciatingly hard. In fact I enjoyed every minute of it. In fact I couldn't wait to get out of high school. I left a week before they graduated to get back up here and go to work and I enjoyed every minute I spent here.*
- Kain:** *So you were here two years working here, and then you went back down to Lower 48 and went to veterinary school?*
- Konnerup:** *Right. I made enough up here to pay my way through and my sister's [?]. I never really felt that I was abused as far as working conditions were concerned. The food was good.*
- Hovis:** *Did you have to bring your own blanket when you were hired on?*
- Konnerup:** *No.*
- Hovis:** *That makes this a better mine.*
- Douglass:** *To give you an idea of contrast. My father has, to my best recollection, his superintendents who're paid \$8,000 a year when they left here. I never heard this from him, but it was my impression also that he was missed because, maybe that was the kind of person he was, he was disappointed that the company would not make him manager. Mr. Stannard, who was manager who, I guess about 1922 or '23 to 1926, was an accountant type, he wasn't a mining engineer, he had little contact with people. That was my dad's forte to keep the ... going and he was good at it.*





*Left to right: Bill Douglass, Mary Ellen Duggan, Peggy Duggan. The three children at far left may be from the Douglass family as well.*

- Kain:** *Much more of a hands-on person than Stannard was.*
- Douglass:** *He got \$8,000 and his house, a free house. I don't think there was any charge for that house at all. When he left here he had a contract with The Consolidated Copper Mines in Kimberly, Nevada, for \$12,000 and a house and a car.*
- Kain:** *Wow, that's a big jump.*
- Douglass:** *When we left in September of '29, just before the stock market, and my father had accumulated from this stock market business that Nels is talking about, again my memory may be wrong, \$500,000 in stock which he had on a 50% margin and when the stock market broke, he ended up in Nevada the summer of 1931 with \$30,000 left of everything. And they closed the mine. There were 1200 or 1500 people working in that operation. Big operation. The only people left in town were a dozen or so. The price of copper by that time had gone down to less than a nickel a pound. I think it got down as low*

*as three cents. They were mining it in Kennecott when it was 60, 70, 90 cents. He left there and he didn't have a job and he was out of work for six months.*

- Konnerup:** *Those were tough times. My father invested pretty heavily in the stock market and again a lot of it on the margin and it was devastating.*
- Douglass:** *These people - I could remember my father talking about it - pooled in three shares of Eastman Kodak and U.S. Steel. It was gold. I'm going to retire on that.*



- Konnerup:** *Airplane stock, it was something, then all of a sudden nothing.*

- Douglass:** *So any case, if you compare the \$4.25 [per day] now or what we were getting in the depression in 1933, people were being paid 8 or 10 cents an hour to work in the states for laboring jobs. So a dollar for an eight hour shift or 50-60 dollars a month was pretty good to live on.*
- Konnerup:** *All the farm labor was a dollar a day or less. Generally food and lodging provided but it was just common labor.*
- Hovis:** *You took the job more for the food and lodging than for the money.*
- Konnerup:** *But overall I would again say that I had opportunities to look at mines in the east coast of the United States and the Southwest and Montana and places like this and I had a very close associate that was a toxicologist for the Anaconda Copper Company in Montana. So I've had an association with mining operations here and there (?) and I must say this is the best operation I've ever seen. From the standpoint of wages, from the standpoint of social benefits. And I think we can attribute almost all of the social benefit program to Bill Douglass's father [William]. Because the other management level people were certainly not interested in the welfare of the worker who had [?].*
- Konnerup:** *Also the people in New York - Kennecott people - were and are as far as I know some of the hardest nosed people of all time in their approach to, that all they wanted was [?] ore on that boat going to Seattle.*
- Kain:** *Real quick, having interviewed your sister [Yvonne Konnerup] several years ago, just refresh my memory. You came up here where?*
- Konnerup:** *1923, 24. We were from Stanwood, Washington.*
- Kain:** *And what did your father do there?*
- Konnerup:** *He was an auto mechanic and a car salesman. He sold Chevrolet cars. Had his own garage.*



**Kain:** *And they added on a third bedroom to one of the houses just to get you here so he had a companion.*

**Konnerup:** *His father again authorized Chris Jensen to put that room on there.*

**Kain:** *To get you up here.*

**Konnerup:** *To make it adequate. He was a nice pops. We loved him.*

**Kain:** *And when you left, your dad didn't stay in mining, did he, your father?*

**Konnerup:** *No, he ran the store, the tail end of the store.*

**Kain:** *Did he stay in retail business when he went...*

**Konnerup:** *He tried to set up a business in Juneau, a retail store business in Juneau. It was the depression times and it didn't work out and he came out and his mother built a store in Granite Falls, [Washington]. She was getting quite old and he and my mother took over. And he built some*

*apartments. He did quite well. He retired with two or three houses. He was not rich but well off.*

**Kain:** *And your father stayed in mining.*

**Douglass:** *My father stayed in mining. He went from the closed plant in Kimberly, Nevada, [near Ely] to a place called Downieville [California] where he was in joint venture with two of his college classmates. It didn't work out at all. And he was offered by Mr., what was his name - he was the automobile man - E.L. Cord, who manufactured the cord \_\_\_\_\_, He had a little mine in a place called Penryn, just outside of Auburn, [California] and my dad worked there for six months. His best friends from years ago was a geologist who was worldwide known and he recommended dad for a job in British Columbia. So we left Auburn in 1934 and he took over this mine in Penticton, British Columbia, just near Penticton. It was called (Hambley?), British Columbia, and ran that. That was*

*New York-operated and owned by people who had operations in Ecuador and then, [with] the success of that plant, he was invited to go to New York and be the vice president in charge of operations for all their mines. Went to Ecuador and eastern Canada. He held that job for ten years and couldn't stand commuting from Scarsdale or to New York so he quit that job and went back to have an office in Seattle for the company and do private geological consultation. He lived in Seattle for the rest of his life and died when he was 90 years old.*

**Kain:** *Well, I thank you both very much. It's a lot of information that we haven't been able to get from other people that grew up here because they weren't that involved in the mine. It's been real helpful.*

**Douglass:** *Well, Nels, particularly having worked there.*