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# MAGIC BAKING POWDER

## Reminiscences of Porcupine Mining Camp in Early Days

Former Manager of First Bank at Schumacher Writes of Life in This Camp in 1910 and 1911. Newspapers Were at a Premium, and Life Was One Grand Sweet Song Sometimes.

"Caduceus," the staff magazine of the Canadian Bank of Commerce has made its April issue a mining number. Much of the material in the magazine is written by members of the bank staff now in Northern Ontario or by former residents of this district in the bank's service. Probably to readers of The Advance the most interesting article in the magazine will be the one by Mr. W. G. Whitesides who was the first Bank of Commerce manager in this camp and the first manager of any bank in Schumacher. Mr. Whitesides writes most interestingly of early days in the North.

Mr. Whitesides says that when he went first to Cobalt as accountant he knew about as much about mining or about life in a mining camp as the ordinary officer on first arriving at Kingston, Jamaica, knows about a banana plantation. He found the big feature of the banking business at Cobalt was the payroll. At Cobalt he received his first introduction to the objective system and to foreign labourers in any numbers. On pay-nights from half-past-seven until nine o'clock "all hands spent a really active 90 minutes with Mr. S. H. Logan, now general manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, out in front directing traffic."

"In the Fall of 1910 I was sent into Gowganda to relieve and stayed as manager of that branch," writes Mr. Whitesides. "This was not a very responsible post as the first excitement had passed in the Gowganda camp and it was very dull. However, the weather in September and October was ideal and life was pleasant if uneventful. In November our branch at Elk Lake was closed and the Imperial Bank pulled out of Gowganda which gave us an opportunity to move into the more convenient premises the Imperial had occupied. With this move impending there seemed no need to think the old log building. Six weeks after moving into the new building it was completely destroyed by fire, which cleaned out a good part of the town and the branch had to move back across the bay to the old log cabin which was a regular sieve. My successor was not at all sure that he could ever enjoy life in Gowganda and after a few weeks of winter in the old 'unchinked' cabin I think he was certain of it."

"Early in December I received instructions by telegram to meet Mr. Logan in Porcupine and leave as soon as relief arrived. Before leaving Cobalt I had heard a great deal of Porcupine and the late Milton Culbert of the O'Brien Mine had already been in to examine the lots to be known as the Hollinger Mine, but gossip centered largely around the showings on the Dome. In Gowganda one heard little else but talk of the new camp, and I

nicely within a week or two. The result was that we had to ask the Bank of Ottawa to take charge of our cash each night for the first couple of weeks we were open for business in Porcupine. The mayor of Elk Lake was none other than the famous Jack Munroe who had come from Butte, Montana, to Haileybury a few years before as a professional pugilist. Munroe came to Porcupine soon after and was quite disgusted with some of us because we refused to do our daily dozens morning and evening. He afterwards enlisted with the Princess Pats and is said to have jumped off the second deck of the transport so as to be the first Canadian soldier to touch French soil.

Mr. Whitesides says that the first man he talked to in the Porcupine was a former Cobalt pioneer who gave it as his opinion that it was high time a Bank of Commerce branch was opened in the camp, as he left a suitcase containing three bottles of whiskey with another bank for safekeeping and all he had been able to get back was the suitcase.

According to Mr. Whiteside's story, the bank premises at Porcupine had very little floor but lumber was already on its way from Cobalt for the expected tent quarters. There were four double bunks and plenty of blankets and usually there was a full house as at that time it was part of the banking service to provide sleeping accommodation for visitors and they were numerous.

"The location of a permanent town-site for the Camp became a problem and we opened a sub-branch at South Porcupine which ensured plenty of exercise for the manager," proceeds Mr. Whiteside. "Our Sunday mornings were usually devoted to, a trip to the bush to bring in birch and tamarack poles for the week's firewood and many accusations of riding the saw were heard before members of the staff learned to handle the cross-cut saw and axe with any degree of proficiency. There was no laundry and Sunday afternoon was devoted to washing by those who were fussy about their clothing."

"During the break-up in April only first-class mail matter was brought into the camp, and newspapers were at a premium. To get around this annoying regulation we arranged to have a Toronto paper sent in by registered mail and always found somebody ready to give us a place near the head of the line at the post office wicket in order to speed up delivery of the paper. Then about 20 men would follow the paper back to the office where it was divided up into single sheets amid loud protests from those who got the less interesting pages. The newspaper made a lot of new friends for the branch."

"The big fire of 1911 wiped out both our offices and sent us back to banking in a tent until a temporary building, 16 by 20 feet, was obtained, which served both as a banking room and living quarters for a staff of five. Finally the sectional building at Latchford was moved to South Porcupine and we had all the comforts of home including a vault, teller's cage, furnace, bath room and plenty of space. This building was later moved to Schumacher, when the business of the camp had definitely centralized in the Pearl Lake section."

"On Labour Day, 1911, the Timmins Townsite Company held an auction sale of lots in the projected town of Timmins. The approximate location of the railway station was known and the rest was all on blue-print. We reserved two lots, or fifty feet, on

the corner immediately north of the site which the bank recently bought, but the price of \$2,200 was considered out of the question and we finally opened in Timmins in rented premises in 1915.

"In 1913, when the Royal Bank closed out of Porcupine, we bought their little building in Schumacher and opened two days a week from five to half six in the evening and on pay-days from five until eight. This meant that on pay-days we had to drive both ways as the train went back to South Porcupine at 20 minutes to seven. I often reflect that it spoke well for the orderliness of the Camp that we made that trip out four times a month through lonely bush with \$15,000 in currency and frequently carried home a gold brick worth \$25,000 without ever being molested."

### TORONTO MAN FOUND DEAD NEAR KIRKLAND LAKE

Sunday afternoon the body of a man was found in the bush not far from the Government road, about three miles east of Kirkland Lake. The body was identified by the police as being W. G. Inglis, of Toronto, who had been stopping at Kirkland Lake for several days and who had been questioned by the police because he did not appear to have any means of livelihood. He had been able to satisfy the officers on this count. The man when found was lying stretched on his back with his legs apart and a twelve-gauge shot gun resting between his legs with the butt of the gun against his heel. The left arm was almost blown off and the left side of his forehead shot away. At first it was taken as a fact without question that Inglis had killed himself in a fit of despondency, and this may yet prove to be the case. However, in view of question as to the ownership of the gun, a thorough investigation is being held. The deceased is described as a man of 45 or 50 years, of medium height and build. Papers on the body gave the address of near relatives in Toronto who arranged for the body to be shipped to the city after it was viewed by the coroner's jury.

### GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS FOR THE NORTH THIS SUMMER

Announcement was made this week by Hon. Mr. McCrea, Minister of Mines, that nine exploration parties from the geological branch of the department will be at work in the North this summer. The policy followed now is to keep in touch with the new fields in such a way as to be able to

give the prospectors and mining men the large possible amount of information and assistance. Accordingly it is to be expected that special attention will be given to such areas as the Kamiskotia field, the area around Matheson recently coming into prominence and the fields near Sudbury and near Sault Ste. Marie.

Chas. Sandrelli, of North Bay, is out on bail on a charge of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and Thos. O'Connor, sub-contractor on the new North Land highway, is in the hospital suffering from blows on his head, said to have been caused by a hammer in Sandrelli's hands. The latter says that O'Connor used bad language in front of Mrs. Sandrelli. O'Connor denies this, and claims that Sandrelli took offense at an innocent remark, and attacked him with the hammer. Magistrate Weegar will hear the case on Saturday.

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