

DISCOVERY OF THE PORCUPINE



DOMES MINES, STAKED AUGUST 1909 STARTED PRODUCTION IN MARCH 1912

(Continued From Page One)

spot barely a month before, and unloaded their canoe, Bill Bannerman little realizing that not far from here would be his home for the next 37 years.

Across Porcupine lake on the east shore, on what is now called Dead Man's Point, was the one other camp in the district, established by Jack Wilson and Harry Preston. After several fruitless weeks without finding any trace of gold Wilson had gone back to Haileybury leaving Preston to continue the search.

After unloading the canoe of its provisions, pick and shovels, drills and hammers and packages of dynamite, the two prospectors took the trail George and Geddes had blazed through the bush to where George had staked nine claims under the name of Scottish Ontario Mines, which he was now re-

lifts the heavy bag out of the canoe, tosses it over his shoulder and carries it the mile through the bush to the camp.

To ensure getting up early for a good day's work the prospectors had included an alarm clock in their supplies, and it was the duty of the young cook to rise first and get breakfast ready over the open fireplace. However, as Bill relates, the youngster had developed such a hatred for an alarm clock somewhere in the past that he was always up and had the alarm turned off before it could ring. Never once during the time he was with them did the set alarm get a chance to wake the sleepers or startle the wild-life of the quiet forests.

Staking it claim in those days was subject to certain regulations. There had to be rock showing, and when the prospector found rock that had quartz showing and was satisfied he had made

Davidson came from southern Ontario and had run away from home at the age of twelve. After being buffeted around for a few years he headed west and spent twenty years prospecting from the old gold fields of the Cariboo in B.C. to the Klondike in Yukon. Every new strike would see Davidson pulling up camp and heading for the new fields. When he heard of the strikes at Cobalt, he had, like the Bannerman brothers, headed for northern Ontario. And he too, was to make a name for himself.

He pitched his tent not far from the Bannerman camp, and, according to Bill Bannerman, said that as the Bannerman's were in the Porcupine first he would not stake a claim until the Bannermans were satisfied with what they had staked.

While facts are a little uncertain it is believed that Davidson advised Harry Preston to stake where the Dome mine now stands. That happened in August, the first big stake in the district.

Davidson made quite a good strike himself. Following a blazed trail by a prospector who had been in the district about seven years before, and who was believed to have been drowned, Davidson followed the line of blazes to a huge tree on the shore of the Matagami River. It was the last blaze and on the tree was carved the figures "71".

Confident that the "71" signified the existence of gold, Davidson immediately began a systematic search in a semi-circle 71 paces from the tree. The brush and woods was thick and the rocks covered with moss, and the flies and mosquitoes were in swarms near the river's edge. But Davidson persevered and nearly three weeks later, when Bill Bannerman had gone down to see how the lone prospector was getting on, Davidson jammed his pick into some moss covered rock and the sparkle of gold quartz met their eyes. Davidson had made his strike.

Hurriedly staking out his new claim, Davidson put some choice samples in his pack and headed out for Haileybury to record his claims and get his samples assayed, the men from the Bannerman camp wishing him luck as he pulled away in his canoe.

In Haileybury Davidson recorded his claims and left some samples to be assayed. Then he went down to one of the bar-rooms for a drink. After the first few drinks he began showing his newly found nuggets to his friends and telling where he had found them. By the time he had finished several drinks there was only the barkeeper and himself left in the bar-room, and by noon the next day practically all the male population of Haileybury were on their way to the Porcupine. Ever since Davidson was called "The man who emptied Haileybury."

Davidson had entered Haileybury broke and one chap had grubstaked him to the extent of \$350. After Davidson had sold his first claims in the Porcupine for a good sum it is reported that he gave the chap who had grubstaked him \$15,000 in return for the stake of \$350.

Among the prospectors that came pouring into the Porcupine in September of 1909 was a small, cheerful man with a black mustache, Benny Hollinger. When Benny arrived most of the land had been staked and Benny, unknowingly, began to stake on a piece of high ground near Miller Lake, which has since been filled in and is now the Hollinger park. Benny stake's would be or part of where Timmins now stands. Unfortunately, or fortunately, he was one of Davidson's claims. But Davidson showed him a likely spot on the far shore of Miller Lake, lower, but where a shallow shaft had been sunk by the unknown prospector seven years before, and where it was believed the prospector had found a pocket of gold, taken it out, and left without staking, later disappearing altogether.

Benny had discovered what was to become the famous Hollinger Mine, the richest discovery ever made in Canada and which became the largest gold

mine on the North American continent.

In spite of the rivalry to stake claims everyone was very friendly, Bill Bannerman said, and if you came into a camp around meal time and no one was there you just took what you found and cooked up your own dinner. It was an accepted practice among the prospectors, and seldom did any ever take advantage of the hospitality of the bush.

Prospectors came and went. Some disgusted by the hardship and disgruntled that they hadn't found gold in the first week or two, others chased out by the flies and mosquitoes and the inconveniences of pioneering life in the woods.

That fall the Bannermans built a log house, which is still standing in Pottsville. Others followed suit and by the winter of 1909 quite a number had built permanent homes in the Porcupine. Others were still living in tents. The first two women in the Porcupine came in the fall of 1909.

The two Bannermans went out and spent the Christmas of 1909 at their home in St. Mary's.

Mail delivery was an uncertain service in those days, the nearest post-office being at Haileybury. In the next few years a post-office was started in one of the stores in the new settlement that was springing up around Porcupine Lake in what is now Golden City, called Pottsville then after the name of the first hotel keeper in the town.

The district got its name Porcupine when a prospector jammed his pick in a porcupine hole and discovered gold quartz.



In those days the people who lived around what is now Schumacher and Timmins had to come to Pottsville for their mail and groceries. After the great fire of 1911 when most of the district was wiped out, building began farther north on what is now the town of Timmins around the rapidly expanding Hollinger Mine and Pottsville began to fade as the centre of the district.

And on the shores of Porcupine Lake the Bannermans watched the Porcupine grow into the wealthiest gold mining region in Canada, that added over a billion dollars to the wealth of the Dominion. From the few people when Bill Bannerman first arrived is now an estimated 50,000 making their livelihood from the gold mines started by the strike of the Bannermans. It's a wonderful memory to take back with Bill to the farm he left nearly 41 years before, and likely the pioneering of the Bannermans will be recorded in the school books of Canadian history for adventuresome youngsters to read and perhaps follow in the Bannerman's footsteps in some other great pioneering project.

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Kusti T. Viitasari

Funeral services for Kusti Theophilus Viitasari, retired miner, of 60 Birch St. North, Timmins, who died on Tuesday, March 18th, were conducted in the chapel of Walker's Funeral Home at two o'clock Sunday afternoon, March 23rd, in presence of many friends from the Porcupine, Sudbury and Port Arthur districts. The Reverend A. I. Heinonen conducted the services in Finnish and English. In connection with his short sermon he mentioned some of the earliest experiences he had with Mr. Viitasari, whom he met in Copper Cliff, during the year 1913, and later in Timmins, while opening Presbyterian Church mission work among the Finns and Scandinavians in his wide parish of New Canadians all over New Ontario, from Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury districts in the South to Timmins and Cochrane in the North.

During the service in the chapel, Rev. Heinonen was assisted by the choir of the Consumers' Co-operative Store. The choir rendered "Integer Vitae" in Finnish. Mrs. O. Korkola recited a poem. Mr. Emil Telkkinen gave a vocal solo and Mr. Nestor Riihinen spoke a few words in memory of Viitasari.

The late Mr. Kusti Theophilus Viitasari was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Salomon Viitasari of Perseusajoki, Vaasa Province, Finland, where he was born Nov. 14th, 1879. He came to Canada from Ilmajoki, Munakka, Vaasa Province, Finland, during the year 1907, settling at Copper Cliff, where he was employed by the Canadian Copper Co. Ltd. (now the International Nickel Co. of Canada, Ltd.)

During the year 1921 Viitasari came with his family to Timmins and was employed by the Hollinger Consolidated Gold Mines Ltd., working as a miner during the next seventeen years, until he was pensioned for the rest of his life. As one of the few early Finnish pioneer miners in New Ontario, he was widely known all over the mining communities of Sudbury district and the Golden Area of Northern Ontario.

To mourn his loss he leaves his wife, Edla Wilhelmina Viitasari; (nee Rein) their daughter Lilja (Mrs. Salomon Niemisto) at Seinajoki, Tornava, Vaasa Province, Finland; their son, Taisto and his family at home, 60 Birch St. N., one adopted daughter, Rachel (Mrs. Tauno Collander), Port Arthur, one adopted son, Olavi Viitasari, at Petroskovy, Soviet-Russian Karelia, and one sister, Sandra (Mrs. Herman Gustafsson) at Canmore, Alberta.

Interment service was conducted in the Timmins Cemetery. The pallbearers were Messrs. Leo Laakso, Nestor Riihinen, Salomon Schroder, Anton Maki, William Waisanen and Victor Ristimaki.

Beautiful floral tributes were received from: Milna, Taisto, Mary, Diane, Rachel, Tauno, Donald and Carol; Mr. and Mrs. A. Maki, Mr. and Mrs. E. Peterson, Mrs. E. Valenius, Mr. and Mrs. N. Heila, Mrs. Ida Huhtala, Mr. and Mrs. K. Kari, Mrs. Mandi Niemi and family, Bill and Tami Place, Aarre Kivi and family, Mathilda Homfeldt, Hilma Walden, Greta Wainio, Netta Taner, Irja Kuusela, Aino Kempainen, Mr. and Mrs. E. Kallio, Hilja and Alex Koskela, Laila and William Sivunen, K. Heinamaki and family, Hulda and Elmer Sivunen, Florence, Peter and Barbara Bromley, Mrs. A. Kyllonen and family, Mr. and Mrs. Helge Nashlund, Annie and Nilo Aho, Aino and Otto Korkola, Viesti and Oliver Linda Kallunki and Kunnar, Nellie, Lehtisalo, Elso and Arvo Virkkala, Mrs. Alma and Kenneth Orr, Hilja and Ralph Miettinen, Toivo Pelkola, Salmi and Veikko Lehto, Hulda, Aina and Bill Sundqvist, Lillina and K. A. Merikallio, Mr. and Mrs. Nilo King, Ida and William Waisanen, K. Kallio, Salomaa family, Maiju and Nestor Riihinen, Kaija and F. Perkio, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ristimaki, Fanny and Nick Luhtanen, Elsie and Leo Laakso, Aino Valve, Fanny Salo, Olga Peltoniemi, Ennio and John Eskelin, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Haapanen, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Slack, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Taskinen, Mrs. Mary Hahto, Laina and Maunu Honkala, Ennie and Henry Keineck, Mrs. Hulda Leino and William, Linnea and Jalmar Korri, Helmi and Andrew Helmo, Aili and Imari Schroder, Sanna Kuusisto, Helmi and John Lehtisalo and family, Mrs. Tilda Latvala, Fina and John West, Signe and Sam Maki, Charles Emery.



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SOUTH PORCUPINE Robert Alec Hodgins

Sympathy is extended to Mr. John Hodgins and family of 135 Bloor Ave., who are mourning the death of Robert (Alec) Hodgins of Shawville, aged 85, father of Mr. J. Hodgins.

The deceased, a retired farmer, was well known, not only in his own home town, but by many from Shawville now living in the Porcupine.

Mr. Hodgins died on Monday after a long illness. His son John has been with him since early in January. His funeral, held on Wednesday afternoon from the Anglican Church in Shawville was given masonic rites.

His wife predeceased him four years ago, and he had twelve children, eight of whom are still living — Gerald, of Stockton California, Ken, of Noranda, Eva (Mrs. Wm. Hanna) of Shawville, Duncan of New Jersey, John of South Porcupine, Lyle of Shawville, Mary (Mrs. Moore) of Barneveld New York, and Sophia (Mrs. McKinley) of Shawville.

SOUTH PORCUPINE

**P. H. Murphy Appointed To
Canadian Welfare Council**

Mr. P. H. Murphy Township Clerk-Treasurer has received word of his appointment to the Provincial Committee of the Canadian Welfare Council.

This council is a national organization and many outstanding Canadian figures serve upon it. As its name implies the work of the Council is with welfare work — pensions, social service, etc., and it is an honour that one of our township has been selected to serve upon it.

The first convention is to be held at Niagara Falls early in May and Mr. Murphy has the permission of council to attend for the two days scheduled.

The strong man was explaining his act to his agent.

"I place a heavy stone on my head," he asserted, "and then my assistant picks up a sixteen-pound sledge-hammer, swings it with all his might—and cracks the stone in half."

"The agent grew dizzy at the thought. 'That's marvellous,' he enthused. 'But how about your head — don't you ever feel it?'"

"The strong man waved a hand. 'Yes,' he admitted. 'That's why I carry aspirins.'"

Nowadays when the boy friend asks, 'Can you cook?' the girl friend replies, 'No; can you?'

ICE SKATING

THURSDAY
8:30 p.m. Public Skating

FRIDAY
8:30 p.m. Public Skating
2 to 3:30 p.m. Public Skating

SATURDAY
COMBINES vs. ST. MIKES
SUNDAY
8:30 p.m. Week-end Skating Club
Skating Club

MONDAY
RESERVED FOR HOCKEY

TUESDAY
Skating Club

WEDNESDAY
8:30 p.m. Public Skating
2 to 3:30 p.m. Public Skating

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