

THE WALKING QUESTION MARK

Newsletter of the Grand River Heritage Mines Society

Always Digging For Answers

May, June, July August 2001

Vol. 9, Issue # 2

BITS AND PIECES by Jean Farquharson

We celebrated spring on a glorious sunny April 28th - at an **executive and planning meeting and field trip at Five Oaks** - observing trilliums, bloodroot, violets, jack-in-the-pulpit and skunk cabbage springing forth in the wooded areas along Whiteman's Creek. Five Oaks was buzzing with people. The fishermen were in the river on the first day of the season catching rainbow trout. Lots of people were basking in the sun or wandering around between workshops. The day before, the heronry had been disturbed by bulldozers from the gravel company scraping off the topsoil nearby preparing to open up another gravel pit, but all was quiet. They had been stopped by officials from disturbing the breeding herons.

At our meeting in the Green Room (thanks to Yvonne Stewart and Five Oaks) many plans were made for the year 2001, and reports on activities already carried out:

Part of our publicity is through *Grand Actions Registry*, a directory of organizations along the Grand which in some way support the Grand as a Heritage River. Every year we send GRCA an outline of our activities, accomplishments and plans accompanied with photos or maps. Every year the GRCA sends a copy of this publication to GRHMS in care of Ilse Kraemer. If you want to see a copy, she has

it available for reference. Many other organizations which we can link up to are listed. *Grand Actions Registry* for 1999 is due to be available soon, and our report for 2000 has been sent in. It is also available on the Internet.

Mike O'Byrne is in the process of applying through LACAC for a plaque to be dedicated to the first gypsum mine in Ontario at the Forks of the Nith and Grand Rivers. Robin McKie has asked us for information about some of the Haldimand County mines for "plaquing" as well.

Our application to the Ontario Historical Society for Affiliation has been sent in and we are awaiting a visit from one of their representatives at our next meeting. Be sure to remember to come to our **Annual Meeting in the Parish Hall of the Golden Horseshoe Antique Society at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 26th**. Our theme will be *People and Families Involved With Gypsum*. We hope that our members as well as the general public contribute to the program.

Our research committee is working on getting the **booklet on Five Oaks** ready for the press. There is some writing and revising to be done, but the major part of the publication has been put together.

Several of our members attended the **Grand River Watershed 4th Annual Heritage Day Workshop** at the Walper Terrace Hotel in

Kitchener on Monday February 19th. The theme was *Heritage Makes Sense*. There were many speakers from up and down the Grand, covering many topics - black history, making history alive for children, restoration of historic buildings into municipal buildings, museums and condos, Kanata Iroquois Village, private environmental projects, etc. All groups had the opportunity to set up a display and learn about each other's organization. We came away with lots of handouts, and spent some money on historical books. I encourage you to attend these annual Heritage Day workshops.

Brantford Lapidary and Mineral Society's 29th Annual Gem and Mineral Show was held on April 7th and 8th at the Paris Fairgrounds, and as usual we had a great. Cathy's free handout of Manitoulin fossils was very popular as was the display of her impressive collection of Manitoulin fossils. Ilse brought some of her vast collection of Indian archaeology and a variety of types of gypsum, and as usual Ilse and Jean prepared a display of the hikes and history of some of the mines - this year the Carson Mine and the Caledonia Mine. We were sorry to learn of the death of Richard Murphy (Barbara Topp's uncle), who had arranged and taken us on the tour of the Caledonia Mine, and so we dedicated the display of that mine in his memory. Mike O'Byrne prepared a case for the chunk of wall plaster that Seraphin DaSilva had found while tearing down a very old house. We thank all the people who volunteered their time at our booth and for their efforts at preparing the displays.

At our meeting, members expressed the need for **badges for members** working at our display, and the need for **a new sign**

professionally made.

The **research team** has asked for help in finding information about the **Grand Valley Park** which existed in the early 1900's with a stop along the Grand Valley Railway between Paris and Brantford. It was an entertainment park, with a carousel and other features. One could take the electric tram from Brantford, Paris or Galt for an excursion to the park. If anyone has information about this, please get in touch with Ilse Kraemer or myself.

This year the theme of the **Golden Horseshoe Steam Show** is *Entertainment*. We will have to think a bit about how we can follow this theme for our organization's display. The date this year is **August 4th, 5th and 6th**. As usual we are looking for more volunteers too help man the display.

Paris held its first **Cobblestone Festival** last year, and will hold its second this summer. In 2002, our organization may be involved because the theme is **GYP SUM**. We will need lots of time to prepare. Our contact person is Karon Sinning.

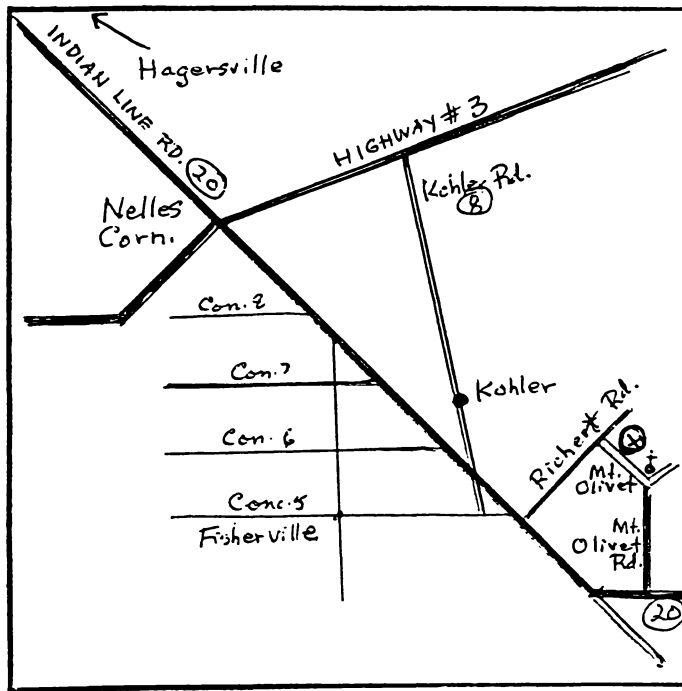
Set aside **September 16th** for a return visit to the **Open House of the Canadian Drilling Rig Museum** near Selkirk. We will need to pool rides for the trip down there. They now have their own website on the internet.

A correction was drawn to my attention. In the article about the Martindale Mine, Thomas Martindale was referred to as John Martindale.

We have lots of material for this newsletter. Thanks to those who contributed. But before you read it mark your calendar with the following dates:

COMING EVENTS

May 21 (Monday)- Field Trip to Mt.Olivet,
10 a.m. Call Ilse to arrange car pool.



Late in May, date to be determined **Field Trip to Hagersville Mine**. Phone for details.

May 26 - **Annual Meeting**, York
1 p.m. See *Bits and Pieces*.

June 3 - Field Trip to **Taylor Farm & Capron Mine**. Meet at Pottruff Rd. north of 403 at 10 a.m.

July - August (tentative) Trip to **Chrysler cave**. Date to be arranged. Call Ilse.

August 4,5 - **Golden Horseshoe Steam Show**. Volunteer some time.

September 16-Visit to **Canadian Drilling Rig Museum - Open House**

Early fall: **Holstein & Aikman Mines**.
Call Ilse for date.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO EARTH SCIENCES MUSEUM

Our friend Peter Russell has a display every year at the annual lapidary show. He is the curator of the Earth Sciences Museum at U. of Waterloo. You may view rocks and minerals, learn about volcanoes and glaciers, etc. The biology exhibits include skeletons or parts of buffalo, mammoth, a sabre-toothed tiger, and a magnificent dinosaur collection.

A field trip to this museum would be ideal for the Mines Society members.

The hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Open Canada Day. Open evenings and weekends on request for group tours. We would need to car pool because parking on campus is expensive.

Let us know if you are interested in going on a group tour.

MORE GYPSUM MINES?

By Cathy McArthur

After the Rebellion of 1837, a fleeing rebel named Samuel Lount, a long time member for Simcoe County, hid out in Dumfries Township at a farm owned by Samuel Latshaw on Lot 25, Concession 4, on the Paris Plains near the Grand River. Latshaw had been the Town Warden for Dumfries between 1819 and 1830.

Lount was almost discovered by a magistrate and barely escaped by running out the back door and hiding out in the caves along the Grand River. Lount almost made his escape to the States by crossing Lake Erie, but strong winds blew his boat back to Canada near the mouth of the Grand River where he was captured and hanged.

Another rebel on the run, William Stockton,

was said to have hidden in these same caves at the Latshaw/Spottiswood farm while evading pursuit from a detachment from Guelph that was searching for rebels. Samuel Latshaw's daughter, Catherine, married Alexander Spottiswood, a neighbouring farmer. In 1850, A. Spottiswood leased the plaster beds and mills from Coleman, Curtis and Capron, and Hamilton, and "had a right to take out 1300 tons of gypsum annually for 300 pounds and 2/6 per ton for any gypsum over that amount."

Could these caves used for hideouts be gypsum mines? Many mines were "wild", having no recorded history. There is a sign of former mining activity in this area north of Paris, but more research and exploration will be needed to uncover the area's history.

Sources:

Rebellion on the Townline, by Margaret Stockton.

*Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt and the Settlement of
Dumfries in the Province of Ontario*, by James Young

SHADE'S ARKS

by Cathy McArthur

In the early 1800's, the pioneers of Dumfries area had to take their grain to the nearest mills on Ancaster Creek and at Cootes Paradise to be ground into flour at a cost of one tenth of the flour ground. The roads were nearly impassable even after they were frozen. The trip was long and usually made on foot. A man named Miller, formerly from the Niagara Region, saw the need for a local mill. He made a deal with Joseph Brant for several hundred acres around Mill Creek. Miller hired Nathaniel Dodge, a squatter who lived in a cabin on the Cruickston farm flats on the west side of the Grand River near Blair to build his mill in

1802. The mill was 24 by 28 feet and one and one half stories high and located on the site of what is now the Galt Armories. A miller named Maas was hired to run the mill. However, the mill didn't prosper as Miller had hoped. When war broke out in 1812, Miller's sympathy with the Americans forced him to give up the mill and flee Canada. In 1816, William Dickson bought the entire land block from his cousin Thomas Clark, the real land owner from the Niagara District who was uninterested in his property.

Accompanied by Absalom Shade, a Pennsylvanian hired to survey his new land purchase, Dickson came to this area and decided to found a town at this site and named it Shade's Mills.

Absalom took over the abandoned mill and ran it until his new improved Dumfries Mill was completed in 1818. He built a sawmill in 1817 and added a distillery in 1820.

In 1832, Sir John Colborne granted the charter to the Grand River Navigation Company, backed by William Hamilton Merritt, Shade and other business men and trustees for the Six Nations (who became shareholders without their approval or knowledge). This company planned to make the Grand River passable to the mouth of the river. Unfortunately for Shade, Brantford was made the head of navigation, not Shade's Mills as Absalom had expected.

Undaunted by this decision, Shade constructed eight flat-bottomed barges called arks, up to eighty feet long and sixteen feet wide and able to carry up to 400 barrels of flour each. Shade also owned the cooperage where he turned out his own barrels. The barges also carried lumber, {gypsum}, hides, pork, shingles, liquor, grain and other goods to markets accessible by the Welland Canal over 100 miles away. A barrel of flour that once cost three shillings to get to market

now only cost one shilling to ship downstream by barge.

The son of William Dickson lived with Shade and accompanied him on the first experimental trip down the Grand River. Horses were used on towpaths to pull the barges along where possible. Most of the time the barges were poled along by local Scotsmen employed by Shade, or were carried downstream by the current all the way to Port Dalhousie. The season ran from early May to late October during periods of high water. Shade's Arks were used for three years. On one trip, Absalom's barge upset on a rock below Glen Morris. Shade unloaded the goods from the wrecked barge onto a replacement ark. Shade poled the new ark downstream to the island, reloaded the barge and continued down river to Port Robinson. It was Shade's final trip, marking the end of an era using barges from Shade's Mills. In 1855, the Great Western Railway built the Galt-Harrisburg line, making it possible to ship goods year round.

Sources

The Grand River, by Mabel Dunham

This Unique Heritage, by Bill Moyer

History of the County of Brant, by Reville

Brant County, by C.M. Johnston

GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEMS

At our meeting on April 28th, a discussion was held about the use of global positioning systems for locating the gypsum mines. To quote Tim Philp in a recent Brantford Expositor article about GPS's:

"This is a small hand-held device that will pinpoint your position on the earth to within a couple of metres, relying on a network of satellites that follow close orbits around the earth. Each satellite has a very accurate

clock that broadcasts time signals to GPS receivers located on the earth. The GPS then takes this information, and through triangulation, calculates the position of the receiver. The resulting position can be extremely accurate."

Each new model shrinks in size. The newest model can fit into your shirt pocket, but that is the limit of shrinking it. You have to be able to read the screen.

If you are using a GPS when you travel, you can navigate your way to restaurants, hotels, gas stations, etc. The built-in maps provide guidance and show you where you are as well as helping you to find your destination. Wouldn't this be a great device to have on our field trips?

THE CAYUGA OR EDWARDS STATION MINE, by Ilse Kraemer

This report is written to honour the memory of Ron Belliveau, the last owner of the Cayuga Mine. Ron was a warm, generous person with a big smile on his face. He loved life and especially the life on his beautiful secluded property where he built a house for his family. His property is the famous slough forest of Cayuga, with rare trees and plants belonging to the Carolinian climate. Located on the property is an abandoned gypsum mine, unknown and secluded. Ron was very generous to our group by letting us do research and roam around his land. He passed away very suddenly in December 2000, shortly after his 50th birthday. Ron, we miss you!

The first time I saw the Cayuga Mine was around 1967, during an archaeological survey in the area. At that time a lot of buildings were still visible including the headframe. I did not know then that we had

gypsum mines in the area and did not pay much attention to it.

I did not return to the spot until the Mines Society was established in 1993, when I remembered the head frame and realized what it was. By then, everything had changed - there was no more head frame, no old buildings, only heaps of rubble and remnants of concrete foundations. It was then that my search for information on the mine started. This elusive mine is one of the youngest historic mines in the area, with not much known about it.

Local historians had little information. It was very secluded in the woods. I asked the locals about it. They called it the Edwards Station Mine because its location was next to the Railway Station. After this I met the owner Ron Belliveau.

Old news articles reported mines in this area between 1910 and 1918. In 1940, interest in this mine began again because the quality of gypsum was reported the best in the area. In the Department of Mines Report for 1954, on p. 56, E.A. Trevor wrote that the Cayuga Mine was incorporated in 1940 with a permit up to 1949. Operations were started April 1, 1942, on Lot 25 by the Cayuga Gypsum Company Ltd. A vertical shaft was sunk into the ground to reach three feet of pure white gypsum. The shaft was cribbed with 2 by 10 inch elm planks and was divided into (1) a bucket way, (2) a manway, and (3) a ventilation way. Mr. W. McDonald was in charge and employed five men. The shaft was 85 feet deep. The mine was organized by room and pillar method, and extended in all directions. The company held 100 acres of land. In 1947 a total of 3,222 tons of gypsum was hoisted

and shipped by rail. Nine men were employed with W. L. Sebalt as manager. There were many problems with water, which had to be pumped constantly; they had no mill - only a small crusher. The pump and crusher broke down constantly. The biggest problem was ventilation. Another 2 by 10 inch casing was put down in 1948 to establish better air quality. Drillers worked at night on their stomachs to drill holes for laying charges. After blasting, the muckers removed the gypsum during the day, transported it by truck to Edwards Station and dumped it in railway cars. In 1948-49, a second shaft was opened near the railway track about 1000 feet south of shaft number one. A total of 5,244 tons of gypsum was produced, with 10 men employed and D. Morten in charge.

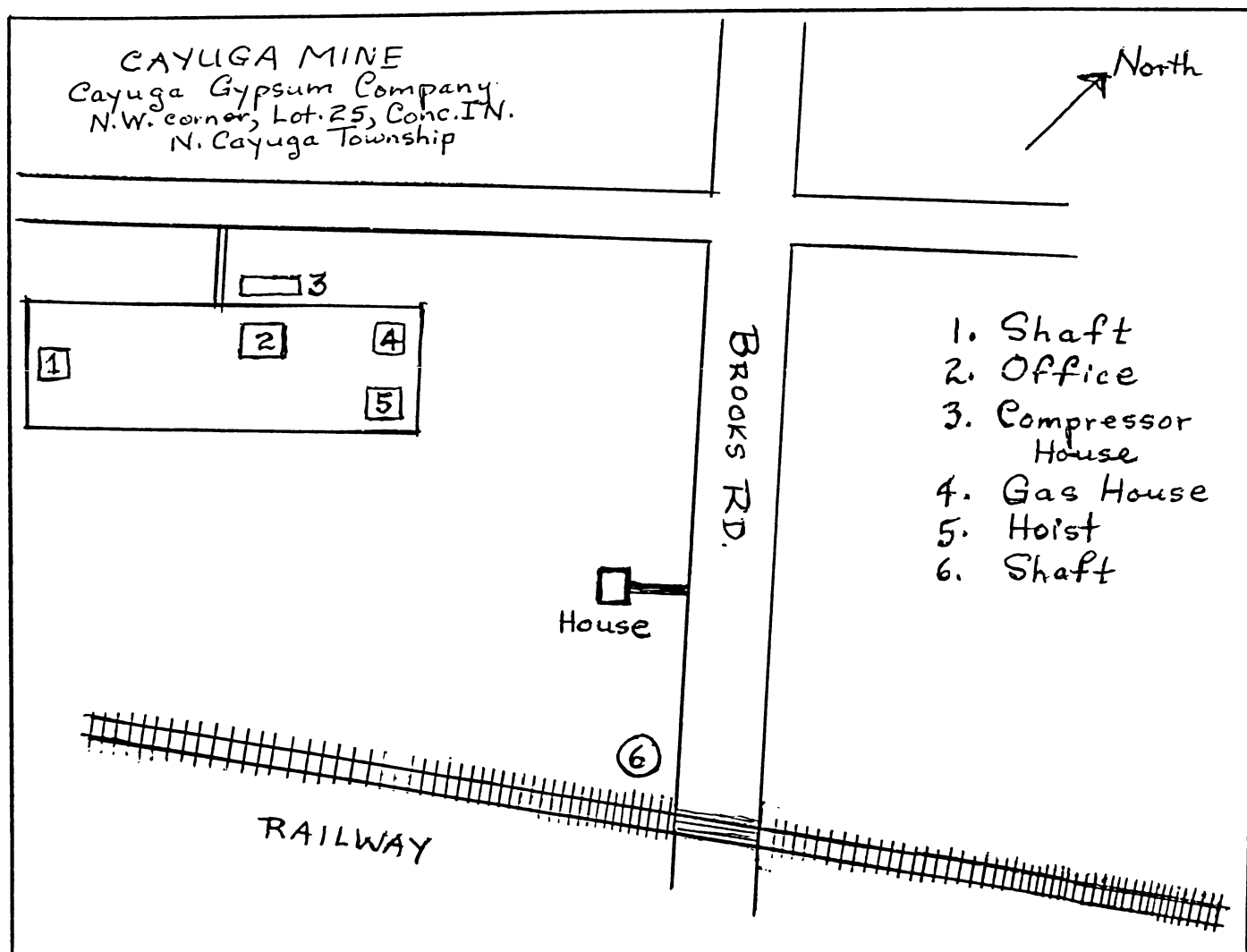
In 1950, mining operation slowed down, and was only carried out intermittently by a small crew. At this point, they used one shaft, the headframe, a small crusher and one storage bin. 1,025 tons of gypsum were produced during the year with six men employed. In 1951, the mine was condemned and the operation stopped. The gypsum pillars (pure gypsum) were removed and shipped to Toronto. The mine was foreclosed and the mining rights went back to the surface owner.

The last inspection of the mine was December the 8th 1993 by T.E. Burns, B.Sc. Locals told me that the mine was opened, closed and re-opened many times, and that ownership changed frequently with money lost on shares by investors. People referred to the mine as the "milking cow". The owners didn't put their own money into it, and their only profit was the shares. Conditions worsened from year to year. From the Ministry of Northern Development

and Mines Office in London, we received a description of the geology of the area: The overburden consists of unconsolidated material 15 to 18 metres thick. It is a glaciolacustrine clay and Wentworth till. The bedrock is dolomite and shale of the Salina Formation.

They noted that in 1993, very little subsidence had been noted on the property, with the only collapse close to the shaft site

Today a different picture greets us. Old timbers are rotted away and many collapses all over the property. The scene changes from year to year. The sinkholes are filled with white milky water - gypsum dissolved in water. Since the supporting pillars are gone, the whole roof is gradually sinking. Since water stabilizes the mines, in drought conditions more subsidence occurs, or instant ponds



Members With Fees Paid for 2001

Dr. Gary Balsdon	395 Bishopsgate Rd., Brantford ON N3T 5L7	519-449-2023
Diane Baltaz	94 Walnut St., Paris ON N3L 2J7	519-442-1288
Fred Bemrose	6 Horace Drive, Paris ON N3L 2P5	519-442-3282
Gloria and Paul Boulaine	4 Cross St., Paris ON N3L 1Z1	519-442-4809
Judith Buchanan	Box 7, Vittoria ON N0E 1W0	
Joe Clark	436 Old Mill Rd., Delhi ON N4B 2X7	905-582-0981
Mary Cassar	Sundial House, 1 Hickory Hollow, RR # 1, St. George	519-448-3875
Seraphine DaSilva	685 Junction Rd., RR # 2, Canfield ON N4L 1C0	
Al & Jean Farquharson	823 Powerline Rd., RR3, Paris ON N3L 3E3	519-442-2156
Harry Frishette	167 Sherman Dr., Simcoe ON N3Y 2T2	905-426-0790
Mrs. B. Huggett	1577 Elite Rd., Mississauga ON L3J 3B3	905-822-4558
Lou Knechtel	RR #3, 17 Passmore Cres., Brantford ON N3T 5L6	519-759-5076
Ilse Kraemer	23 KingsHill Ln, Brantford ON N3T 6A3	519-756-6634
Cathy McArthur	RR #1, Princeton ON N0J 1V0	519-442-6707
Mary Martindale	Apt. 204, 803 Concession St., Hamilton ON	L8V 1C6
Mary Nelles	1 Peebles St., Caledonia ON N3W 1J6	905-765-2404
Mike O'Byrne	676 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Mt. Pleasant ON N0E 1K0	519-484-2795
Bud Parker (Business)	28-279 Sandowne Dr., Waterloo ON N2K 2C1	519-888-0169
Gwen & Howard Parkhill	252 Mile Hill RR # 3, Paris ON N3L 3E3	519-442-3514
Alf & Eileen Peart	RR # 3, Caledonia ON N0A 1A0	905-765-2142
John Quinsey	2678 Homelands Dr., Mississauga ON L5H 1H8	905-822-3932
E.A. Robson	39 Woodway Trail, Brantford ON N3R 5Z4	519-759-0116
Barb. & Francis Topp	RR # 5, Dunnville ON N1A 2W4	905-774-4521
Raymond Wardell	512 Main St. E., Dunnville ON N1A 1K5	905-774-7713

PLEASE NOTE: If your name does not appear on the above list, you have not paid your fees for 2001, which means this is the last newsletter you will receive unless you submit your fees. We have lots of interesting articles coming up in the next newsletter. Mail your fees today before you forget and lose out!

PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND GYPSUM

by Jean Farquharson

Since the theme of our annual meeting in May is *People, Families and Gypsum*, I thought it would be suitable to contribute excerpts from an article in *The Clearing House* of November, 1929, describing the staff of the Caledonia operation. We are unable to provide their pictures because they did not copy well in the photocopy of the

newsletter I received.

The Gang

The boys at the Caledonia plant are a great unit. They are proud of their plant and stick together whether it is backing their plant against any other in the country, or in supporting a hockey or base ball team. Any business or sporting organization is usually

successful insofar as it sticks together. That is probably why Caledonia is one of the oldest but most enterprising branches of the C.G.A. This is evident in either mine or mill, where a community spirit is strong enough that it caused the building of a convention hall, partly for dealer meetings, but also for get-togethers of the boys at the plant. Caledonia is successful not only in supplying her own plant with capable talent but also sends successful graduates to many other arms of the organization. Outside of Herb Haire, who was superintendent there before managing the Alabastine division, there is Jack Renwick, former mine superintendent and now "super" at Milton, Bud Lamb, who used to have charge of the block plant but now looks after some of the biggest jobs the Construction Department undertake. More recently Charles Brown migrated to Montreal to become prominent in Joe Strable's Montreal organization as superintendent of the Wallboard plant, having been for some years in charge of steam operation at Caledonia. And, of course, Joe Strable himself was at Caledonia for something like six years although not with our firm at that time.

Much of the credit for the progress made in late years at Caledonia is due to the efforts of Leo Robinson. "Robby" has been there ten years now and has been in charge of the entire plant for four years. He has practically lived on gypsum all his life. Born near Alabaster, Michigan, he, his father Frank, and brother Jack all toiled in the interests of the U.S. Gypsum Co. before casting in their lot with the old Alabastine Co.

[The following is the present (1929) staff of the Caledonia plant]:

[Major Thomson and Ted Ratchford are in the Research Department.]

Elmer Senn, mill superintendent, started here in August 1910, spent a few years at Elora and later returned to Caledonia.

Abe Owen, chief mechanic and assistant to Senn. Mr. Owen has worked here since November,

1920. The reason for his smile is the new son and heir.

Ed Clark, foreman of the warehouse, has been with the company since July, 1906, during which time he was away for the year 1910. He is as cranky as he looks, only he has had a lot of mixed cars lately.

Then there are the two Jimmies - Jimmy McWilliams, foreman in charge, Scotch, and Jimmy Kerr, mine superintendent on the rig. They are both quite short but this is an asset as they do not have any trouble bumping their heads on the mine roof. Mr. McWilliams has been employed here for the last ten years and Mr. Kerr since August, 1929.

The veteran Bailey Jones started here when the company first began operations... He enlisted in 1915 and returned to us in 1927[illegible].

Coming from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. At present, Mr. Jones is in charge of the new wallboard plant. His worst habit is that he plays Rummy on Saturday nights. With Mr. Jones is his assistant, Nels Morrison, who, we can say, has no bad habits since he was married a few months after coming to us in June, 1928.

George Nicol, loading foreman at the Block Plant, joined the company February, 1926.

Fred Harrison, superintendent of the Block Plant, ... has been with the firm practically since its organization, serving overseas and rejoining the company in 1920. He is generally run ragged by the Construction Department.

The Research and laboratory crew [consist of] Everett Small, who has been with us since March, 1925; Alfred Thompson joined the company in July, 1929; Dick Heddle started in April, 1925; Jack Erdly has been with us since July, 1927; Tom Bouckley is chief quality man and has charge of the laboratory boys, Reg Hudspeth has been with us only a few weeks. There are two chiefs - Harry Ball, who is chief engineer, was connected with the Block Plant

when the Ebsary Co. started in Canada, and stayed on with C.G. L. & A. When they took over the plant from the Ebsary people some five years ago. Ken Baird, the chief electrician, joined the company in January, 1975. Outside of work, he manages the baseball team, bowls on the green, plays hockey and keeps the juice in the wires.

Then comes the office staff: Bill Thompson, accountant and head bookkeeper, has been with the firm since May, 1927. We know this lad is quite bright as he keeps constant company with one of the local school teachers. Miss E. Joseph, clerk, has been with the firm since October, 1923, being absent on sick leave for a year and a half. Then comes Wilf. Old, the man who bills out all the cars. Wilf worked his way up since 1924, learning to make everything before taking over the shipping. They say he has been going to Hamilton regularly all summer taking treatments for the shiny spot in his attic but the last report was that he would have to resort to Dry Insulex for the winter.

Miss H. Murray, stenographer, has been with the firm since May, 1927. The "Old Man" [Mr. L.V. Robinson, manager of production at Caledonia, Lythmore and Montreal East] himself will finish his tenth year here on the 16th of November. During these ten years, we have seen great changes in the Wallboard plant – production

jumping from four million feet per year to twenty-five million feet. The Block Plant has also undergone changes and made great strides. We have added two kilns during this time and should have two more now. The fifth member of the office staff, W. Webb...has been with the company a little over a year.

FIBRE OPTICS ENABLES OPERATORS TO MINE BY REMOTE CONTROL FROM THE SURFACE

The wonders of Technology! a Sudbury miner can operate a scoop tram remotely from the surface at the Sudbury Inco mine. This new process is called "telemineing", and enables drills, scoop trams, and other underground mining equipment to be operated from the surface by miners sitting in front of computers and television monitors. Inco is world leader in applying this new technology. They took cable TV with a bunch of radio antennae on it. The operators can see and hear the machines they operate. They drive their machines with keyboards and joysticks as one drives a video game. The next project they have in mind is to operate equipment in mines elsewhere in the world from the Mining Operations Centre in Sudbury.

From: An article in March 26th, 2001 Toronto Star.

This newsletter is edited by Jean Farquharson. We are not responsible for errors. We are looking for more information about the mining industry in Southern Ontario. Submissions are welcome.

Deadline for the next newsletter is September 1, 2001.

Please send **correspondence** to Jean Farquharson, R.R.3, Paris ON N3L 3E3. Phone 519/442-2156. Fax 519/442-2373. For **membership inquiries**, contact Ilse Kraemer, 23 KingsHill Lane, Brantford ON N3T 6A3. Phone 519-756-6634.
