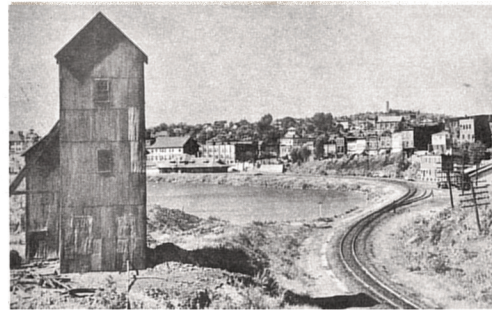


The young Italian knew he could
 make his dreams come true in Canada
 — and he did. When Fortune's
 wheel slowed, he gave it a flick



Antonio Giachino's sense of humor worded the posters of his Cobalt travel agency. "See This World Before the Next!" he urges.



In the past 50 years Cobalt has slumped from silver centre to ghost town and now it has embarked on another big boom. Mr. Giachino saw it all.



His old Headframe store boasted the "best natural refrigeration in the north." It is one of the landmarks of the little mining community.

Mr. Giachino's Land of Opportunity

By Adelaide Leitch



The 78-year-old takes time from his agency business to repair his movie projector. He has been, also, a bank manager, police chief and store owner.



Mr. Giachino likes to make the most of opportunity. While his friends scoffed at the historic flight of the Spirit of St. Louis, he made \$3000.

WHEN he was a small boy in Italy, Antonio Giachino dreamed the great European Dream — of the New World, Land of Golden Opportunity.

Now, at 78, he lives in Canada and he feels serenely sure the dream has come true. He has not been disillusioned.

Mr. Giachino is the oldest, most beloved business-man in Cobalt, "silver capital of Northern Ontario." He has been chief of police and bank manager. He took the Prince of Wales on a tour of the Cobalt mines. He made good in a succession of imaginative projects, including a travelling movie business, a store in a mine's headframe that gave Cobalt its most famous landmark, and a travel agency. And he has a twinkle in his eye that comes of satisfying living.

But brown-eyed Antonio Giachino, his face pleasantly weathered from roaming the north country since the pioneer days of the mining boom, has a sure-fire approach to the business of making dreams come true.

When opportunity seems slack, he nudges it. What seems ordinary to other people, intrigues Antonio. He wonders what opportunity might be lurking in it. When New World friends assured him that "big business" was killing opportunity for the "little man", he scoffed. This, to him, was nonsense.

What happened when Lindbergh made his historic flight non-stop across the Atlantic was typical of Mr. Giachino's pursuit of opportunity.

He was in the telegraph office when word of the successful crossing came buzzing in. After mulling it over, he sent off a wire.

"What was the plane?"
 Back came the answer, "The Spirit of St. Louis."

That wasn't the answer he wanted. He wired again, and this time he got it — the name of the manufacturers of the plane engine. Cannily, he bought stock in the company, while friends roared with laughter. The flying machine was a "flash in the pan", they said. It would never be used generally, they said. But Antonio Giachino shrugged his big shoulders.

Before very long, he had made \$3,000 from the "flash in the pan", his friends weren't laughing any more.

But his shrewdness in business takes second place to his affection for the human race. New Canadians can often talk to him in their own language, and the children follow him about town when he uses his cartop loud-speaker to

announce a coming movie or a bit of news. Once, in the tiny northern Ontario settlement of Raymore, he rolled into town to find the children offering up prayers because they heard that he was dead. Until he heard their story, Antonio Giachino couldn't figure out why his appearance caused such excitement!

"I usually look like the Pied Piper anyway," he laughs. His sociability spills over to clients he sends world traveling through his "International Traveling Ticket Agency". He boasts he never lost a passenger.

"You know why?" He smiles serenely. "I was brought up religious, and I always pray for my passengers."

He expects his clients to keep him posted on their progress, and is personally aggrieved if they don't. The "weighty, two-way correspondence" fills a row of binders above his desk.

"See this World Before the Next!" he blazons in great posters above his tiny headquarters. Or, "The Birds Go South in Winter — Why Don't You?" tantalizes passersby.

His office, which adjoins his living quarters at the crossroads of Cobalt, is papered with gaudy travel folders, maps and clippings which have overflowed to the ceiling. In this loaded beehive, he works with a small globe at his elbow and mountains of correspondence around him.

Once, he got an urgent letter from a gentleman in Dawson City inquiring how to get his friends out of Europe. Mr. Giachino researched painstakingly, and finally referred the man to the nearest immigration office in Dawson City. Another time, his office was crowded for weeks with excited Orientals, helping him cut red tape to get a relative from Hong Kong to North Bay.

Antonio wasn't long in Canada, before he began inventing whatever he wanted and didn't have. First, he had his heart set on a picture window over the kitchen sink, which was against a solid, inside wall. He got his picture window by setting up a huge picture of Banff, illuminating it from the back, and hanging window curtains alongside the "view."

When he found a refrigerator would cost him \$500, he built one with a tap for ice water at the bottom. He even wheeled a local plumber into installing a self-designed biffy.

"If you can make one for four dollars, how can I sell one for forty?" complained the plumber.

He put a built-in cigarette lighter on his desk, constructed on the same principle as a car's lighter. And he set up a recording machine to make sure he got his telephone messages correct.

But probably his most ingenious arrangement was his Headframe Store with "the best natural refrigeration in the north." Cold air from the silvermine shaft used to seep into the "cellar", where the temperature was only 38 degrees even on the hottest summer days. People used to come to Cobalt just to see it.

"Some merchants blow hot. We blow cold!" Mr. Giachino used to tell them modestly, as he opened the door to let an icy draught blow up the shaft.

The mine no longer operates, and water seeping into the tunnel has stopped the circulation of cold air. Mr. Giachino has sold out and moved into his Travel Office next door, but the Headframe Store is still the landmark of Cobalt.

Antonio Giachino came of the religious mountain people of Piedmont, Italy. His father, Matteo, was a champion fuse lighter who helped put through the St. Gotthard Pass, first of three tunnels through the Alps from Switzerland to Italy. His mother, Maria, was a famous singer of yodelling songs, and she took over the management of the little family when Matteo lost his eyesight in a blasting accident.

One day, Maria slipped on a ladder in the goat stable and fell. So Antonio was born prematurely, the 13th child of the family, and so tiny, he says, his father put him into a Dutch shoe for a cradle.

At sixteen, Antonio boarded a boat at LeHavre and, in the New World of Opportunity, his first job was in an Italian fruit store in Vermont, where he roasted peanuts. Later, he was promoted to the job of waiter. He served, in his time, Teddy Roosevelt and Admiral Dewey. He came to Cobalt in 1905, on the trail of the prospectors and mining men who were opening up this rich country in Ontario.

Here he set up his first small provision store. Before long, he had created an epicurean market for imported Swedish flatbread, Messina lemons and Italian oils in a most unlikely place for it — a beef-and-potatoes mining town.

In the same improbable place, he established a Travel Agency which, last year, was cited by a major airline as the best agency outside their own offices. But what would you expect from a man who once designed his own letter-head, showing Michaelangelo in one corner, photographing the world with a press camera?

In 1934, Antonio brought back from the Chicago World's Fair the first 16 mm sound motion picture projector in the area. And so was started his movie circuit through Ontario and Northwest Quebec where, as he had already noted, all forms of entertainment were scarce.

In 1919, he was chairman of Police and Relief, at the height of a typhoid epidemic, he went about town to organize the work with a mouthful of garlic to prevent infection. The same year, he took the Prince of Wales and the city guard to visit the mines. ("A nice lad, the prince!") In the course of his career, he also ran the local branch of the Bank of Montreal and built three different theatres.

Now he's trying to ease off. He doesn't travel as he used to and he's trying to retire from the agency business.

Antonio Giachino, the little Italian boy born in a goatshed, has made his gilt-edged dream of a Land of Opportunity come true in a Northern Ontario town, to his complete satisfaction.