



THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society

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Partners on the Trail

Kyle Audette of the Teck Park Recreation Program and the Cobalt Coleman Lions Club approached us with a request to partner in his Cobalt Cache adventure: a high-tech variation of a scavenger hunt that requires a GPS device.

Located at several locations throughout the town and along the Heritage Silver Trail, you'll find special geocache icons and the GPS coordinates mounted on our existing trail signs.

For more information regarding the Cobalt Cache, contact Kyle cobaltcolemanlionsclub@hotmail.ca or visit the Teck Park Recreation Program on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Teck-Park-Recreation-Program-1890029317954414/>



Up until now, only the Cobalt and North Bay libraries had the *Nugget* available on micro-film. **All 43 micro-film reels in the North Bay collection have been digitized and are now uploaded to the website.** Access is open to anyone via the internet by paid membership to the OGS and the Nipissing Branch. More information on their website <https://ogs.on.ca/shop/bundled-membership/>

Art and the Artist



Art shop owner Laura Landers said, "I have something for you. Come on it and I'll tell you about it." What a surprise to learn that the Cobalt Historical Society received a donation of a painting from 1937. Do you recognize the street scene? Bonus points if you are familiar with the artist, E. Gilmour Smith. More about the art and the artist, later. First, a brief sketch of Jim Bailey, the first of two Cobalters attached to the painting.

Jim Bailey 1917 to 2000

The painting came to us from Jim Bailey's son, Paul who wrote, "I always remember it proudly hanging in my parents' home. Dad was very fond of it and his Cobalt roots!

"He was born in Cobalt April 3, 1917. His parents were both born in England and ended up in Cobalt due to the mining boom. His father worked at the hospital as a maintenance man and did other odd jobs around town as far as I can remember. The family lived on what was called the "Buffalo" property I think. My mom's dad was Rev. Charles Geer of the Baptist Church. He was the minister there for a few years, and that is where my parents met.

"Dad worked at the local grocery store before joining the army and going overseas. His dream was to return to Cobalt and take over the business

Art and the Artist

after the war, but apparently his new bride who he married in February 1941, was not too keen about living there! With Jim and his two brothers and sister all gone off to join the army, his parents left Cobalt and moved to Toronto, never to return."

When the war was over, Paul's mother and her first born son Charles were living in Gravenhurst, where Rev. Geer worked at the Baptist Church. Jim joined his young family and managed the local grocery store there for a couple of years. Then he worked at Rubberset Co., a local factory that made paint brushes and rollers, as their "Personnel Manager". He held that position until his retirement in 1982. Jim Bailey was also very active in the local Legion branch and service clubs throughout his life in Gravenhurst. He had a good and active retirement and died February 13, 2000.

Over the years, Jim and his family took several trips back to Cobalt and spent summer days at Bass Lake.

About the Painting

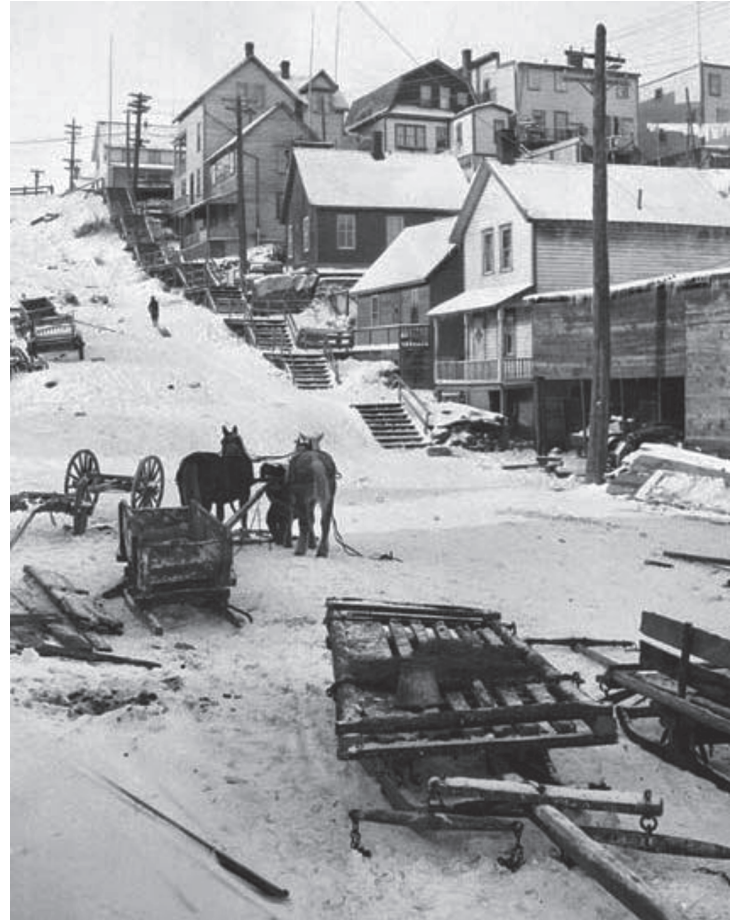
The oil painting is a view of Grandview Avenue, looking northwest from the corner at Cobalt Street. The homes along the top of the scene are on Baker Street. The Public School, today the Spring Pulse Poetry Park, is behind the viewer.

The black and white photo to the right shows the same street seen from a slightly different angle. Brewer's livery is off to the right.

Cobalter Dorothy Black Nichols has an unsigned and therefore perhaps unfinished painting that has similar features. Rev. Smith was the officiant at her parents' wedding. Her father, Tommy Black owned Black's Hardware store on Lang Street. As a side business, he framed pictures for clients. It is possible that her Cobalt streetscape was one that was left behind and never claimed.

The Artist: Ernest Gilmour Smith 1892 to 1984

Gilmour was born to Benjamin and Alice (Laidley) Smith in West Zorra Township, April 15, 1892. According to his University College yearbook, "E.G." wandered around the country and received his education at Woodstock College, Mount Albert High School, and Jarvis Collegiate. In 1915 he received his BA in Modern History at the University of Toronto where he took a "prominent part in the YMCA and class affairs." By 1916, his family had moved to Toronto and E.G. Smith was at Knox College.



Grandview Avenue (date unknown)



Possibly an unclaimed Smith painting

World War I



Young E. Gilmour Smith in military uniform. Prior to serving in World War I, he had three years with the Queen's Own Rifles

In May 1916, the twenty-four-year-old joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force and in October, he was shipped to Europe. While in France, he suffered a serious injury to his left shoulder and spent more than a year in recovery. In 1918, he was declared medically unfit and discharged from service.

Back in Ontario, he completed his schooling. The *Torontonensis Yearbook 1920* states, "Although he will be able to pound the pulpit with only one hand as a result of his two years' service at the front, Ernest will be able to adorn the ranks of the Canadian clergy."

Ministry

After he was ordained, Smith ministered to the spiritual needs in several Manitoba communities. In 1925, he was a part-time minister at St. Andrew's Church in Winnipeg. By 1930, he was performing mission work in remote mining camps such as Cold Lake and Cranberry Portage.

He came to Cobalt in 1932 and immediately immersed himself in community projects. He, along with Kiwanis members Dr. E. F. Armstrong and A.P. Landry formed a committee whose mandate was the preservation of the old stone fireplace at the residence of the Dr. William Henry Drummond. As we well know, their mission was a success and three years later, Smith, who was now president of the Kiwanis Club, planted Norway spruce and red pine trees along the approach to the cairn at the poet's former homestead out at Kerr Lake.

Early in January 1935, the art department of the Cobalt High School hosted an exhibit, the theme of which was an artist's view of Cobalt. The *Temiskaming Speaker* noted that "Mr. Smith was the prime mover in the organization of the Cobalt Art Club." Among the artists

who loaned paintings for the show were Miss Carol Cole, Ernest Sawford-Dye, A.Y. Jackson, Sir Frederick Banting, and George L. Cassidy. Alex MacLean displayed some of his colourized photographs, and the exhibit was rounded out by a large collection of work by the high school students. And of course, Rev. E Gilmour Smith's artwork.

Smith was also involved with the United Church summer program at Camp Lorraine at Piere's Point. In 1937, he was business manager of the camp. The same



An undated image of Rev. Smith

year, he was board secretary of both Cobalt's branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses and of the local relief committee who organized food for the drought sufferers in western Canada. A year later, he helped organize the Temiskaming Music Festival. In February, 1939, he announced to the congregation that he was moving on to Timmins.

To Timmins

To describe Smith's time in Timmins, we refer to a publication issued on the occasion of Mountjoy's 25th Anniversary:

Rev. E.Gilmour Smith, B.A., D.D., came to Timmins as associate with Rev.Mr. Mustard at First United. His infectious enthusiasm was largely responsible for the church now standing at the corner of First and Mountjoy. It might be said of him too: "If you seek a memorial, look around you".

Dr. Smith's wardrobe was never limited to the clerical collar and robes nor his concern with spiritual needs alone. A day's activities might include sod-cutting, brick laying, carpentry, snow shovelling, ditch-digging, or painting. In a moment's flash he could switch from workman to clergyman officiating at a marriage. He is given much credit for the organization of the Porcupine Festival of Music.

This beloved pastor delighted the congregation and initiated much good-natured chatter among the women with the announcement of his forthcoming marriage to Miss Ruth Lucas, a former Deaconess in the Anglican Church. This took place in August 1944. On March 14, 1948, Lucas Gilmour was born and on December 24, 1951, Eric Laidley completed the family circle.

He never tired of fighting the liquor traffic and it was not until after he left Timmins that the "wets", after three tries, were able to add cocktail privileges to the half-hundred alcohol outlets and club licenses already shaming the Porcupine. In 1958 he semi-retired to assist at George Street United Church, Peterborough.

In 1954 Mr. Smith was honoured by election as President of the Toronto Conference with its 495 ministers, a post held only once before by a "Northerner." The next year Victoria University bestowed on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

An Incomplete Sketch

At this point in our story, easily accessible records are few and far between. For one, we have been unable to find an obituary for Ruth who died in 1976 or for



Gilmour when he passed away in 1984. Both are buried in Omeme. We'd welcome any information you might have about Rev. Smith and his family. It would be wonderful to find his family to tell them about the painting and how it came to us.

A Toast

This year, Paul Baily and his cousin were unable to make their annual trip together to tend to the Memorial Bench they installed down by Cobalt Lake, dedicated to Aunt Doris "Bunny" Bailey, Jim's sister. So, on their behalf, and following the long held tradition, I paid a visit to the site and raised a glass of Bailey's in honor of Doris, Jim, and Paul.

And to E. Gilmour Smith, for bringing us all together.

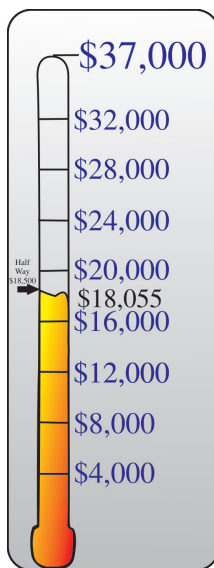
by Maggie Wilson



Fund Raising Update

GREAT news regarding our fundraiser to fix the roof on the Right-of-Way Mine! We keep growing closer to our goal for the roof with **\$18,055** in donations.

Donations by mail are fine or you could send us an Interac e-transfer from your bank using this email address: chs@heritagesilvertrail.ca Together is the way it works. Thank you.



Submissions for the Newsletter are most welcome and needed. So if you have some piece of history to share please let us know. We can scan photos, and decipher handwriting if we have to do so, but a word processor file attached to an email would be greatly appreciated. Sharing history of the homes you've lived in, places you've worked -all the pieces of Cobalt life will have some interest. History isn't just the money, the mines, the businesses—it's what life was like that also needs to be captured. Help us do that.

