

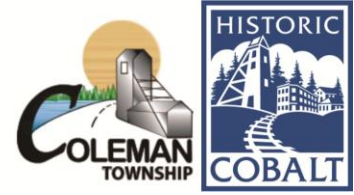


THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society

Box 309, Cobalt, ON P0J 1C0 cobalthistoricalsociety.ca

Vol. 35 No. 2 May 2026



Cobalt Historical Society Annual Report 2026

Presented at the Cobalt Historical Society Annual General Meeting, Monday, May 2nd, 2026

1. **Preservation of the Heritage Silver Trail**
2. **Promotion of the Cobalt Historical Society and the Heritage Silver Trail**
3. **Publications**
4. **Our Partners**

Preservation of the Heritage Silver Trail

Thanks to Trail Manager Reiner Mielke and board member Reg Holdsworth for regular inspection and maintenance of the sites along the self-guided tour. Thanks, too, to the volunteers who helped clear the never-ending growth of vegetation.

1. **ONR Closures** – unresolved and unchanged
 - March, 2021, Ontario Northland Railway erected barriers at the Right of Way and Townsite Mine properties, citing a need for environmental and structural assessment.
 - Tourists can view both headframes from a safe distance, though the barriers are not effective at blocking access. Visitors can easily enter the sites, though we, the guardians of the trail, are banned from doing so. In 2025, ONR maintained the sites, removing trash and trimming vegetation.
 - The closure of the Right of Way site is particularly problematic in that we have raised \$21,530 to repair the roof of the headframe. We must keep those funds in reserve, expecting the site to reopen at some point in the future.
 - In 2024 and into 2025, ONR conducted a Heritage Assessment of the two headframes to determine if they are worthy of the designation “historically significant.” Kate Bondett, Senior Communications Manager, advises that ONR has completed the first phase of the Townsite and Right of Way Cobalt Headframe Structural Engineering-Building Condition Assessment. ONR is currently awaiting final condition assessment reports from an engineering firm. The firm will complete a follow-up study and sampling work during the summer of 2025 to investigate timber conditions and the foundation of the structures.
 - We have twice requested updates, without a reply. Nor has the ONR attended CCEAC meetings in the last 12 months. The lack of communication is a concern, and we are considering next steps.

2. **Vandalism** – resolved on a case-by-case basis

Vandals, like the weather, are constant factors in trail maintenance. Theft and deliberate damage will persist.

3. **Repairs to Pan Silver Headframe**

We are still unable to use the CHS office space due to safety concerns. The stiff legs continue to weather and fall apart. We’ve approached the Town of Cobalt about Parks Canada funding and have offered our help if required. Both municipalities were unable to apply in 2025.

Promotion of the Cobalt Historical Society and the Heritage Silver Trail

Social media is our primary way to engage members and those interested in mining or family history.

We continued to help those working on their family history, writing books, articles, or documentaries. This activity is rewarding on a personal level, but also encourages people to join our membership.

Publications

1. We continued to publish our **newsletters**.
2. Editor Brian Dobbs maintains the **website** and adds new content as necessary
3. Since it started, September 23, 2023, we've published 45 posts on our **blog**, "More to the Story."

Our Partners

Our partnerships with Agnico Eagle, Coleman Township, and the Town of Cobalt remain strong.

In 2025, we continued our work with the Haileybury Heritage Museum. We also partnered with the Cobalt Mining Museum and other volunteers to submit an application to HGTV's Canadian edition of *Hometown Takeover*.

The Royal Canadian Legion 100th Anniversary

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion. The executive of Cobalt Branch 44 has requested that we write about their history and the founding members. It will take some time to track down the "people" side of the story, but in the meantime, we'll share what we know about their building and the assorted ground-floor occupants over the decades.

If YOU have information about the inaugural members of either the Great War Veterans Association or the Royal Canadian Legion, please contact us!

38 Silver Street

The present building on Silver Street, just south of the Fraser Hotel, has been home to Cobalt's Legion since 1919. Just about everything a booming northern town needed was located here over the years.

The story begins in 1905, when the T&NO sold the lot at auction. The property changed hands a couple of times before Roy D Devlin bought it. Around 1909, he put up the solid brick multi-storey building you see today and stamped it with his name.

Devlin ran a drugstore out of the northern-most, ground-floor unit. Next-door were medical and dental offices. The storefronts evolved into clothing shops, insurance offices, and, later, a mix of small businesses that reflected the community's changing needs.



Devlin Block next to the Royal Exchange Building aka Bilsky Block under construction ca 1909.

But the real heart of this building is upstairs.

Initially, the Great War Veterans Association held meetings at the Cobalt YMCA, today's Town Hall. But by 1919, they had purchased the Devlin block. Just a few years later, in 1926, the same group of war vets became



The Bilsky Block, aka Royal Exchange dominates the scene, next to the Devlin Drug Store. This was before 1919 when the Great War Veterans Association purchased the building.

part of the newly formed Royal Canadian Legion. For over a century now, this upper floor has been a place of remembrance, camaraderie, and community service. Generations have climbed that long flight of stairs for meetings, stories, and support.

Meanwhile, the ground floor kept reinventing itself. Menswear stores, union offices, a firefighters' museum, classrooms, real estate, hair salons, variety stores—you name it, it's probably happened here. Today, it houses a creative arts studio, which feels oddly fitting: a place that has always adapted is now a place for creativity.

While it may look like just another brick building, the Devlin Block is really a kind of time capsule. It's seen Cobalt as a mining camp, a bustling town, and a community finding new ways to thrive. And through it all, it's remained what it was built to be—a place where people come together, in one way or another.



Syd Watkinson photo from the mid-1950s when the Olive Susan Dressshop and Eric Smith's menswear occupied the ground floor.



A 1996 view of the two neighbouring buildings.

Cobalt Silver Camp Historical Trivia



Test your knowledge of the history of the Cobalt Silver Camp.
Answers can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

1. Cobalt's mayoral Chain of Office has what type of silver in it?
a) Wire b) Leaf c) Nuggets d) Crystal Cubes
2. What year did the 'World's Largest Pothole' occur on Hwy 11B at Cobalt's south end of town?
a) 1983 b) 1985 c) 1987 d) 1989
3. What make and year was the first automobile to arrive in Cobalt?
a) 1908 Ford Model T b) 1907 Stanley Steamer c) 1906 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost d) 1904 Cadillac
4. Aside from Cobalt itself, where and when was the second post office opened in the Silver Camp?
a) Giroux Lake 1906 b) Hound Chutes 1908 c) Crosswise Lake 1909 d) West Cobalt 1907
5. How many days was the 1972 Cobalt Miner's Festival?
a) 7 b) 10 c) 12 d) 14

Gentle Reminder - Membership Renewal 2026

It's that time of year again when we reach out to all our existing (and hopefully new) members with a reminder of the annual membership renewal. It is with your continued support of the Cobalt Historical Society that we can provide the many components of our work, including the Heritage Silver Trail, newsletters, research, and all things history related to the Cobalt Silver Camp. We wish to thank you for your continued support and welcome all donations. They are much appreciated.

Feel free to cut or scan the membership card below and fill it in. You can mail it along with your payment by cheque (payable to the Cobalt Historical Society) or, if you wish, e-transfer to mail@cobalthistoricalsociety.ca

	Cobalt Historical Society P.O. Box 309, Cobalt, Ontario P0J 1C0 cobalthistoricalsociety.ca Membership Form	
Name:		
Street Address: P.O. Box:		
Town/City: Province: Postal Code:		
Telephone: Email:		
Payment – Cheque payable to the Cobalt Historical Society or e-transfer to mail@cobalthistoricalsociety.ca		
Annual Dues: <input type="checkbox"/> Little Silver Vein (<u>One</u> Year Household Membership) \$20.00		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Glory Hole (<u>One</u> Year Corporate Membership) \$50.00		
Donation: <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to make the following <u>donation</u> \$		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please place me on the CHS email list. <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to contribute articles to the newsletter.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to work on the trails. <input type="checkbox"/> Please tell me how I can volunteer.		

Agnico Eagle Closure Program for 2026

The Cobalt Historical Society met with the Cobalt Coleman Environmental Advisory Committee this spring. Other members of the CCEAC are the Town of Cobalt, Coleman Township, the Ministry of Mines, ONR, and the Cobalt Mining Museum. We meet twice a year to share on our respective projects.

Agnico Eagle presented their remediation "to-do" list for this year and acknowledged that it is ambitious. Melissa Leclair, Advisor, Closure and Legacy, said that the company considers these "target projects for rehabilitation this year. We hope to get them all done, but resources seem to be limited these days with all the activity in mining."

Rehabilitation

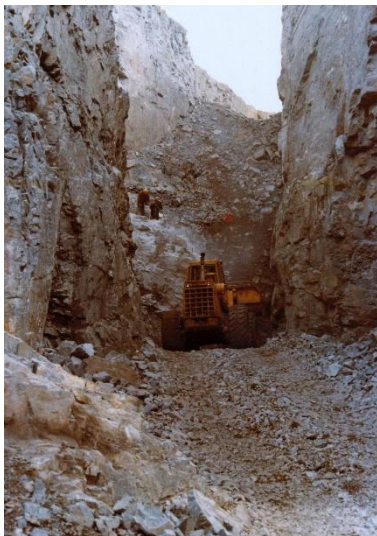
- Nipissing RL404 Portal backfilling (aiming to use Silver Cliff waste rock)
- Nipissing RL406 Stope 102K Rehabilitation
- Penn Canadian No.1 Shaft Cap replacement
- Trethewey mill building rehab
- O'Brien Stope 66 rehabilitation
- Nova Scotia Stopes 1-4 and mill site rehabilitation

Begin design work

- Foster Vein 3
- Coniagas Vein 8 and open cut - this site will require extensive study.
- Trethewey Shaft No.4 (rehab) and No.6 (cap)



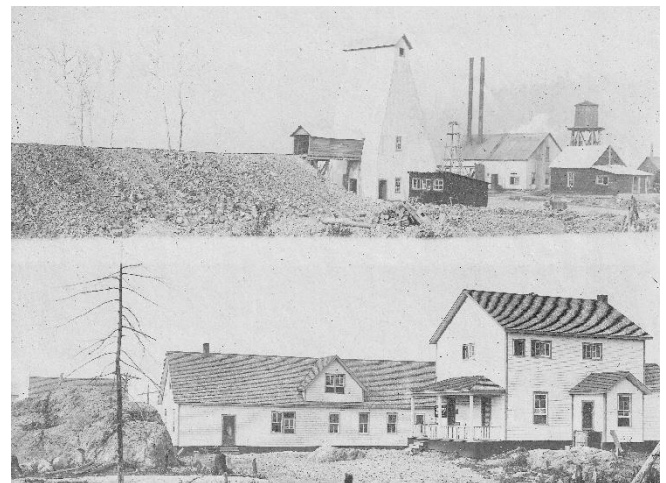
In 1910, visitors could easily walk to the Trethewey Mill near Sass Lake. Today, the site is completely overgrown.



*Coniagas Open Cut 1978.
Photo by Ruth Bernache.*



*Coniagas Open Cut 1981.
Photo by Ruth Bernache.*



1907 View of the plant at the Foster Mine, on Glen Lake.

The 2026 Board of the Cobalt Historical Society

Maggie Wilson - Chair
 Sarah Johnston - Secretary and Research
 Reg Holdsworth - Treasurer and Trail
 Reiner Mielke - Trail Manager
 Brian Dobbs - Newsletter editor and webmaster
 Dwight Brydges - Restoration
 Deborah Ranchuk – Member

Municipal Liaisons

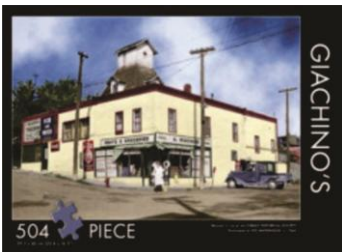
Pat Anderson for the Town of Cobalt
 Marilyn Lubbock for Coleman Township



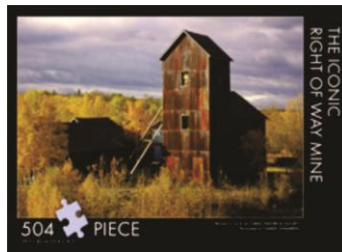
Don't Forget to Visit our Website!

cobalthistoricalsociety.ca

Help Support our Fundraising Efforts - Cobalt Puzzles



Giachino's Coniagas Shaft House #4 circa 1945 as a grocery store.



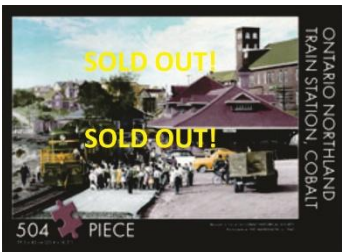
The Iconic Right of Way Mine Photo by Charles Dumaresq.



Right of Way Mine Reflections Photo by Sue Nielsen.



Oblin's Cash and Carry Circa 1945 on Lang Street



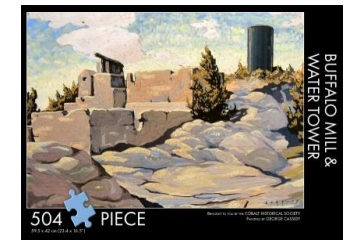
Ontario Northland Railway Station Cobalt 1945.



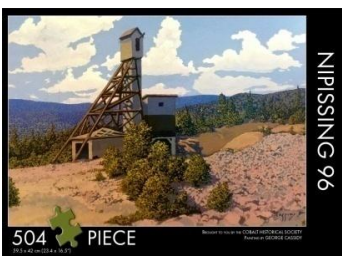
Cobalt Public School Photo circa 1955.



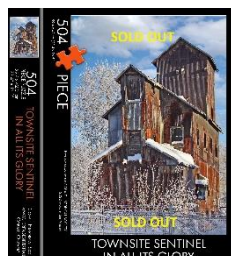
Silver Miller Mine Photograph circa 1950



Buffalo Mine & Water Tower George Cassidy Print



Nipissing 96-George Cassidy Print



Townsite Mine



Cobalt Map by Ruth Bernache



Hometown Hootenanny

All Puzzles \$30. Contact White Mountain Publications at 705-679-5555 or visit www.wmpub.ca for details.

Answers to Cobalt Silver Camp Trivia Questions

1. b) Leaf 2. c) 1987 3. d) 1904 Cadillac 4. a) Giroux Lake 1906 5. b) 10