



THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society



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What is a Community?

This is the beginning of a new year in more ways than one; the Township of Coleman has a new Mayor, Dan Cleroux with Councillors Sue Cote, Cathy Marcella, Lois Perry and Pat Tresidder, while the Town of Cobalt's new Mayor is Tina Sartoretto and a Council of Pat Anderson, Garry Bigelow, Gino Chitaroni, Mike Harrison, Sue Nielsen and George Othmer. These Councils are planning for the future, and to do so, they must look into the past.

Not the past of their collective memories but the historical past for, if all you do is rely on your memory, you cannot go forward; you do not have the ammunition- the facts.

These last two years of the Cobalt Lode have been an attempt to increase the knowledge of the people living in the historical Cobalt Mining Camp. Now it is time to round up the facts as to why for the past one hundred years, we have been living in a political organization consisting of an incorporated municipality within an incorporated township.

When Dr. Willett Green Miller saw the potential of the Cobalt Mining Camp, he realized that the area to the west of Cobalt Lake across from the geological diabase needed to be surveyed into small lots that could be bought so that housing for the miners, mine managers and shopkeepers plus businesses could be erected. Before that the land was divided into farm-sized acres in the Township of Coleman. The surveyors of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway, then progressing north, did the surveying. If this land were to be surveyed today, the lots would not be the size of the originals. They are for the most part too narrow for fire regulations; that is why some lots as they have come up for sale, have been acquired by neighbouring owners. If desired, two neighbours could consider splitting a lot, each of them then having a buildable lot by today's by-laws; a more readily saleable property.

Meanwhile on the outskirts of the Town there came to be built houses that formed the hamlets of Argentite, Giroux Lake, Mileage 104, North Cobalt, Silver Centre, and West Cobalt. Across the Lake were the houses of the Nipissing, the McKinley- Darragh, the Princess and the Silver Queen Mines, all in the incorporated Township of Coleman. Towards the south was the low hill called the Little Buffalo on upper Galena Street. Beyond it was the swamp that eventually filled with the tailings of the Buffalo Mill. Used as a playing field it was called 'The Slimes'. In 1974, trailers were placed on non-surveyed lots by the Town. The next hill called "The Buffalo" was the location of the Buffalo Mine. The houses on the eastern flank, on the south side of Short Street are in the Township but the houses on present day Cambrian Way are in the Town.

Out towards 'Sass' Lake beyond the Coniagas Mining Property was a suburb called the Wright Subdivision of the Town, consisting originally of the east side of Pyrite Street, Ruby Street, Greenstone Avenue and the south side of Coniagas Road. Eventually a new street was built, Dunning Drive, as well as housing built on the other sides of Pyrite and Coniagas.

When entering Cobalt from the south there were houses belonging to the Townsite Mine. To the north, the Town's property was proscribed by the creeks from Cobalt Lake and 'Sass' Lake.

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NORMAN A. FALKNER

OF TORONTO



In 1926, the arena was located at the corner of Miller and Nickel Street. W. Allan Rowe was the arena manager at the time and lived close by at 12 Commission Street.

NORMAN A. FALKNER
THE WORLD'S ONLY
ONE-LEGGED SKATER

26 LARKIN AVENUE
TORONTO 3
ONT.

Dec 20-26

The Manager
Skating & Hockey Rink
Cobalt
Ont

Dear Sir:

Perhaps you have an attendance
on the average for a hard skating night of 175 - thus -

125 adults	at 35¢	= \$43.75
50 children	at 25¢	= \$12.50
Gross receipts for Rink		\$56.25

Do you realize my one legged skating act
as a feature with a hard skating night would
draw perhaps 600 thus -

250 adults skaters	at 50¢	\$125.00
100 " non skaters	at 35¢	35.00
125 children skaters	at 35¢	43.75
50 " non skaters	at 25¢	12.50
Gross Total		216.25
5.25	40% for skating act	86.50
Gross receipt for Rink		\$129.75

How ever big your attendance is you can
increase it in about the above proportion I will
make good money for you. Or can I rent your
rink with stand for a regular hard night? What
nights in January

Yours truly
Norman A. Falkner

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That's it everybody! We are talking about 2 square kilometres of land in the Town of Cobalt and over 700 square kilometres in the Township.

Why? Because the taxes on a small lot were affordable to individual property owners; the taxes on mines and mills built on agriculturally zoned land were less per acre and were hence an incentive for businessmen to purchase the land titles of prospectors, erect head-frames, hire miners, ship ore-laden rock by rail; eventually building ore-crushing mills.

Dr. Miller knew this is how the land had to be divided in order that a mining industry could develop in Ontario. He foresaw what could happen; prior to this Ontario was an agricultural Province. It was the wealth that arose from the silver and cobalt exported from the Cobalt Mining Camp that enabled prospectors to eventually find the gold in Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Noranda and Red Lake. This is why the Province of Ontario had the capital necessary to support the development of the country we call Canada.

Where did this wealth come from? In the early days it came from the Buffalo and Coniagas Mines in Cobalt and the many more mines as they were developed in the Township of Coleman. We thought of ourselves as one. It did not seem strange to us that the Office of the Township and that of the Town were in close proximity to one another. That's the way it had to be! If the Township had been included in the Town then the taxation rate would have prevented the influx of capital necessary to start the mining industry.

How did the people live with the noise of the dynamiting, the pounding of the stamp mills crushing the rock, the dirt of the unpaved streets, the poor sanitation, the accidents, the deaths? You might well ask. People could get away by walking, hiking, taking the Nipissing Central Railway to Haileybury and New Liskeard for a few hours or the T&NO Railway to Bass Lake. People went to camp with their tents in the Township at Gillies Limit, down to the Anima Nip or to Temagami. Some would go down the Lorrain Valley Road past Silver Centre to the Old Mission and United Church Camp on Lake Temiskaming.

If you rely on memory then you are divided by decades; when one talks of the privations of WWII, someone who is now 65 was not living. But someone who is 75 can remember the cream skimmed from the glass milk bottles and saved - the rationing stamps for food- not travelling to visit relatives in New Liskeard because of the lack of gasoline let alone whether one had an automobile.

Someone who is 50 recalls Sherman Mine in Temagami & the prosperity its iron ore engendered while to a 20-year-old there seems to be no readily available work that would guarantee a comparable lifestyle. Interestingly this reliance on memory of Cobalt/Coleman pertains only to those who grew up here; many of those who come here as adults, having no memory of this area, take the trouble to learn the whole of our history. Let us learn from the newcomers. We are one community.

Father M.J. Scully

A former Member of the Board of the Cobalt Historical Society, M.J. died January 4, 2011 at the Temiskaming Hospital after a short illness. A full obituary detailing his devotion to his Faith and services to Parishes in Northern Ontario has been published in the Temiskaming Speaker and The Voice Newspapers. The Board was pleased to have him on the CHS Board as he had grown up in Cobalt and had been the Pastor to St. Patrick's Parish from 1961-1966. M.J. could help with facts of history and was the voice of reasonableness at our deliberations. It was an honour to know so fine a person and we are all the better that he chose to retire among us.