

Reminiscences of the Early Days

By J. E. McKerrow

The Canadian Pacific Railway had reached Sudbury in 1883, and as construction proceeded westward, at a point $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Sudbury on the present main line, indications of copper and nickel were found. Although the value of the find was not then realized, a few hardy prospectors were already in the heavily wooded bush in the areas of Creighton, Stobie, Frood and Evans during 1884 and 1885. Several years elapsed before the C.P.R. continued the construction of the present Soo line, with the objective "Algoma Mills," 90 miles west of Sudbury, as a lake port for a terminal.

Very soon typical mining camps sprang up around the mines and during the years 1885 to 1887 considerable progress was made at Copper Cliff, Evans and Stobie mines. The Evans mine (named after John D. Evans, one of the Canadian Copper Company's early managers) was being developed and had reached a depth of 85 feet during the summer of 1889. A large rockhouse was built, hoisting and other necessary equipment installed, also eight or 10 wooden houses, clap-boarded and plastered, to provide accommodation for the miners and their families.

The pioneers of those early days were the Hambleys, McGees, Kennedys, Websters, Lecks, C. Ade and J. Gribble. The social life at the outlying mines was not too exacting. Sunday was strictly observed, friends visited each other, and where an organ was available, particularly at Hambley's, every one sang, as the miners were mostly Cornish and naturally musical.

The Stobie Mine, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of Sudbury, was also typical of the other mines operated by the Canadian Copper Company, and some of the original pioneers are now thriving as pensioners, namely, Wm. Zinkle and the Switch brothers.

In the meantime, Copper Cliff was a fair sized community as the mine was first opened in 1884 and had reached a depth of 435 ft. by midsummer of 1889.

Part of the village, then known as Shantytown, was centered along the present Balsam Street from the Copper Cliff Dairy area to where the monument now stands opposite the Cliff Taxi stand. This monument was the site of the first log house built for Thos. Johnson. These homes were all log cabins built from timber cut in the vicinity.

The area near the Town Hall, now Granite St. to Charabelle Rd. and Serpentine St. at the McIntosh Block was the business section and had three large boarding houses, Smiles, Pitts, and Boyles, which accommodated the single miners and surface workers.

Two or three of the original log houses built in 1891 from logs cut on the nearby hills still remain as originally built and are still occupied.

Two general stores, Byers and Pearce and Phil Green's, served the needs of the community. That part of Granite St., including the Hospital, Community Hall, Park St. W. and Oliver St. was a large field where hay was grown to feed the Company's numerous teams of horses.

Meanwhile, as mining progressed, a small

community, known as the Old or East Smelter, was established and several small blast furnaces, with necessary square brick chimneys and flue dust settling chambers erected, together with sheds for coke, roasted ore and fluxes. The new highway under construction crosses the original slag dumping area as used from 1887 to 1901.

To facilitate the roasting of ore, a site just east of the Curling Rink was used, along with a wooden trestle about one-third of a mile in length from which the green ore from the various mines was unloaded to a lower level where cordwood had been laid to a height of three feet, then the ore pile raised until the bed reached a height of 20 feet. When sufficient coarse ore had been placed, a layer of fine ore covered the entire bed to a depth of six inches. This was necessary to prevent too fast roasting, which would result in large masses of roasted ore being partly smelted, thereby entailing extra hard work to break up and load. All work in handling these ores was by shovel and wheelbarrow and usually on a contract basis.

Roasting was confined originally to the late fall and winter months and the sulphur fumes were not annoying during these early days. However, as more furnaces and larger tonnages of roasted ore were required, the roast bed area was enlarged until about 1901 roasting was a continuous operation and the sulphur fumes much in evidence, and often during the extreme cold, horses and people suffered frequently from nosebleed.

The Old, or East Smelter, during the period of 1899-1902, developed into a fair-sized community with a general store operated by Kirkwood and McKinnon, who also maintained boarding and sleeping camps for the smelter employees. Two areas partly covered by the present slag dump, housed 20 or 30 families, with the General Manager, James McArthur, and T. N. Kilpatrick occupying fairly pretentious houses. The social life was centered at McKinnon's as they usually had

more facilities for dances and parties which were often attended by the young gallants from Sudbury.

Baseball, tennis and cycling were the main sporting events of the day, with football matches on May 24th and July 1st. Cycling was almost a craze prior to 1900 and a good bicycle cost \$100 to \$120 to those who could afford the price, but the cost of living index was unknown with board and room for \$15 per month. Houses rented for \$5 and \$7 per month without electric light, and water was obtained from wells.

Religious History

As mining progressed, the miners and workers who were of various denominations were served by itinerant missionaries of the religious faiths from the mission posts at Sudbury.

Rev. S. Rondeau and Rev. Wm. Bleweet were respectively ministers of the Presbyterian and Methodist faiths. Missionary priests of the Roman Catholic faith who were following the railway construction work also served their people. Canons Piercy, French and Boydell ministered to those of the Anglican communion.

These missionary services continued until a public school was built in Shantytown about 1890 on the site of the present Copper

Cliff Dairy, where all three Protestant denominations held services in rotation. Indeed, church life was organized much on the Union Church basis, one general Sunday School being held to which all the children belonged. David H. Browne, then chemist and later distinguished metallurgist for the International Nickel Co., taught Sunday School for many years.

Entertainments were held in common to raise the necessary funds and to provide opportunities for social intercourse. The late George Leck of Creighton Mine was the leading actor and through his efforts dramas such as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" were among the many plays staged in the schoolhouse. In the course of time the need was felt for better accommodation than could be provided in a schoolhouse and so a movement was set on foot to build a large Union Church. A canvass was made in the community and entertainments held, and sufficient funds were at length in hand to warrant a start on the church. The result was the building in 1896 of a substantial structure which was then known as the Union Church until 1898, when the Presbyterians took over, and it continued as the Knox Presbyterian Church until union with the

Methodist Church in 1925 under the name of The United Church of Canada. The joint church arrangement did not last very long for the system of a shared church is only suited for very young communities and small populations.

The Presbyterians were the largest body numerically and so claimed the popular evening services, the Methodists occupying the church in the morning and the Church of England in the afternoon at the conclusion of Sunday School.

About 1897 a small Roman Catholic Church was erected on a small hill on the old road in the immediate vicinity of the present Inco overhead railway bridge and near the southeast end of McKeen St., and was served by Fathers Caron and Ragareau until the present St. Stanislaus Church on Balsam St. was built in 1904.

After the old school was abandoned for joint church services it still contained the original library in an upper class room, and then the Finnish people used a lower room for religious services until they in turn built a small hall or chapel on Balsam St. near the corner of Finland St., opposite the Kallio Apartments on Balsam St. Later, in 1910, the present Lutheran Church on Finland St.

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was built and in 1950 the Finnish people celebrated their 50th anniversary of religious activities in Copper Cliff and Waters Township.

The Salvation Army from Sudbury during these early years regularly held street services and meetings in the Orange Hall on Gribble St.

The first Presbyterian minister, according to the Sudbury Star of June 14, 1952, was Rev. J. J. Cochrane, 1901. This statement is doubtful as to correct dates since Rev. James A. White left Copper Cliff in 1901 after ministering for two years. Probably Rev. J. J. Cochrane was the first minister, then Rev. J. A. White followed by Rev. Mr. Graham until 1904, and afterwards C. N. McKenzie 1904-1909; later came Rev. W. T. Prittle, 1909-1923 or 1925 (or until Church Union).

Within a short time the Methodists, being dissatisfied with the working of the joint church building, decided to build a church of their own, which they accordingly did, commencing the work during the summer of 1898 and opening the church for divine service late in 1899. The Methodist Church was in constant use from 1899 until union with Knox Presbyterian Church in 1925, then used only for church socials, Sunday School and other activities of the younger people. It was finally dismantled about 1932. The site of the Methodist Church was the corner of Clarabelle Road and Jones St.

For a short time the Presbyterians and Anglicans continued to use the same church, but a desire to be free from the interference of the larger body and to own a church where they could worship in their own way grew among the Anglican people and though few in number they came to the decision to build a church of their own on a site in Shantytown nearly opposite the present dairy on Balsam St.

Accordingly, in 1900, a small building was erected at a cost of \$600.00. It was not very ecclesiastical in appearance but was warm and convenient, and fitted to serve the congregation for many years. An organ was given by the church people of Sudbury and chancel furniture by the late W. G. Cressey.

During the summer of 1909 plans were discussed for a new church, designs submitted and a site was leased by the Canadian Copper Co. on the important corner opposite the present hospital. In Sept. of 1909 a basement was excavated, foundations laid and walls built. The corner stone was laid.

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by Bishop Thornloe on July 11, 1910, and finally it was dedicated as the Church of St. John the Divine on July 13, 1911.

Copper Cliff Brass Band

The Copper Cliff Brass Band had its inception at the Evans and Copper Cliff mines in the early '90's when a few pioneer players, Capt. W. J. Hambley, Wm. Johns, John Redington, George Leck, Chas. Taylor, Thomas and Harry Stoddard provided music at the local picnics and football games, and at times competed against the Sudbury Band.

From 1895 and during the early 1900's to 1905 the band had a membership of 25 under the leadership of Wm. Johns; later on John Gribble assumed leadership and the band was always in evidence at all public holidays and sports events. During the First War year of 1914 the band was attached to the 97th Algonquin Rifles and went to Military Camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and played also at the Toronto Exhibition in 1915.

After the depression of 1921 the band had only a very few members, but was successfully reorganized in 1925 under the able leadership of H. N. Shrigley, who had his early musical training in Manchester, England. From 1925 until 1934 the band had a membership of 45 and numerous high class concerts were given at various times, and outdoor performances at the Band Stand in Nickel Park. From 1934 to the outbreak of the second World War, Mr. Shrigley's efforts were directed to the teaching of many young members, but since the war the band has been abandoned, much to the regret of the citizens of Copper Cliff.

Mining and Smelting

At the turn of the century the small pro-

ducing mines, viz., Copper Cliff, Evans, Stobie and Nos. 2, 4 and 5, were unable to provide the necessary nickel and copper content for smelting, so Creighton Mine, then being developed rapidly, became the leading high grade nickel ore source of supply. The first ore shipments over the newly completed railroad, (The Manitoulin and North Shore Railway from Sudbury to a point near the Gertrude Mine west of Creighton) were started in the summer of 1901 and for many years provided ore for the roast beds at Copper Cliff, situated at the higher level called the Crow's Nest north-east of the present day Italian section of the town. The Old or East Smelter suffered several serious fires prior to 1898, then finally in 1899 the greater part was destroyed, which required rebuilding on the site occupied by the present Oxygen Plant near the Old McArthur No. 2 Mine.

The capacity of this smelting plant, called the West Smelter, was increased until 1904 when 12 small blast furnaces provided standard matte for shipment to the Ontario Smelting Works, which was built in 1902 near the Canapini Ice Plant at the end of Cobalt Street. This smelting practice continued until the Ontario Smelting Works were destroyed by fire early in 1904.

A few years later, about 1906, another plant was built on the old Ontario Smelting Works site to treat silver-cobalt-nickel arsenical ores from the newly opened mining camp at Cobalt, Ontario. This plant was operated until 1913, then closed down permanently.

The Canadian Copper Company decided about 1905 to build a large blast furnace and converting plant which today is the present main smelting plant. Later, the Copper Refinery was erected in 1929 on the site of the Evans Mine.

As the Manitoulin and North Shore railroad progressed on its way to Little Current, the Crean Hill property of Canadian Copper Co. came into production about 1909 and was another source of ore supply until 1918, then shut down and is now being explored

after a lapse of 32 years. Also, the original Frood Mine was operated from 1911 to 1915, then again opened in 1929 and has since been a main supply of concentrating ore. During these preliminary years 1902-1913 all Canadian Copper Company operations were under the management of Almon P. Turner, President and General Manager, with Capt. John Lawson in charge of all mining operations, David H. Browne, metallurgist, and John L. Agnew, Smelter Superintendent, later President and General Manager.

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Copper Cliff was incorporated a town on April 15, 1901, with Thomas N. Kilpatrick as first mayor; he also had a store and kept the post office for many years afterwards. The Yellow Club was the first residential clubhouse, built in 1888 on the site of the present Bank of Toronto, and was the official residence for Canadian Copper Co. officials. Dr. Edward D. Peters, an authority on copper smelting, who built the first smelter in 1888, Frank L. Sperry, first chemist, and J. N. Glidden, chief clerk, also lived there.

To accommodate the growing bachelor population, several other clubs were built about 1902-1903. On Park St. the Matte and Red Club housed the superintendent and staff of the smelter, as well as Phil R. Bradley, H. J. Baird, Roger Taylor. Serpentine St. had three clubhouses. The Central, at the head of the street going down the subway, another near Gribble St. and Bray's, near Mahon's Tailor Shop. These clubs housed budding engineers and smelter superintendents.

The Gorrinige Club, named after Elizabeth Gorrinige, wife of James McArthur (General Manager, 1887-1902), had been built in 1899 on the site of Dr. H. F. Mowat's present residence and had facilities for dances and lectures on the top floor, reading rooms, cards, and ping pong tables, with pool and billiards, baths and barber shop in the basement. Later, in 1907, this club was re-organized and called The Ontario Club, with a membership limited to 125, and was used until the present Copper Cliff Club was opened in 1916. For many years the Feldham Family Orchestra provided music for the weekly dances.

The original McIntosh Block (a wooden structure), built in 1898, and named after Henry P. McIntosh, one of the original founders of the old Canadian Copper Co., had apartment suites and stores much as it is today and the first tenant was the Bank of Toronto.

Transportation facilities to Sudbury prior



Taken about 1901, this historic print shows the rockhouse of No. 2 Mine and the old West Smelter at Copper Cliff, situated just about where the Oxygen Plant stands today. Rising behind the rockhouse is a cloud of sulphur smoke from the roast beds, which were later moved to O'Donnell. The loading platform in the foreground, and a few of the houses, still stand.

outfit was responsible for the care of the horse on arrival at a Sudbury livery stable. Summer travel was much more comfortable as the stages had seats for only six passengers and the seats were better upholstered. About 1903 a large gas-operated bus was in service. This service was an improvement over the slower travel by horse transportation. By 1905-1906 the Ford was much in evidence and travel was much easier as several livery stables operated small passenger cars.

Schools

The original school, built in 1891, had as its first lady teacher a Miss Potter whose home was in Sudbury, then during the next few years Messrs. Baker and Miller, until 1898 when Albert V. Forsyth and Miss Ross were on the staff. This school had Junior and Senior Matriculation classes. This was the only Public School until 1912 when W. J. MacPhail came as principal, with the staff increased to five or six lady teachers, including Miss Pelton and Mary B. McKerrow. The present Public School on School Street was erected in 1914, with many additions under the principalship of W. J. MacPhail until his retirement in 1945. The growing needs for advanced school pupils led to the erection of the present High School in 1935, situated on the original Nickel Park near the old Creighton Road.

Medical Services

In the early days, prior to 1900, the medical care of the Canadian Copper Company's employees was entrusted to Dr. R. B. Struthers and Dr. R. H. Arthur of Sudbury, who operated a private hospital situated on Elm St. West, in Sudbury. It still remains as an apartment house with some small stores on the street floor. Dr. Struthers usually visited Copper Cliff every other day and a small office was located near the old Copper Cliff mine. If the doctor was wanted

to the turn of the century, and until the advent of the automobile, were provided by stage coach and buggies rented by several livery stables then operating. R. A. Waite had a large livery stable in Shantytown located near the Taxi Stand on Balsam St., and John Campbell at the rear of the old McIntosh Block. The stages as used in the winter were double sleighs covered with canvas on a light frame of wood, with seats running lengthwise for about 12 passengers and heated by a small wood-burning camp stove. Entry was by rear door, and after the journey was completed all passengers paid the driver 25¢, with no insurance against run-aways or upsets. A cutter seating two people, with necessary robes to keep warm, was worth \$1.25, and the person hiring the

to call on anyone ill, all that was necessary was to write the sick person's name on the blackboard. All accidents of a serious nature were taken to Sudbury for treatment.

About 1898 Dr. Schmidt was established as an assistant to Dr. Struthers and had a small office and dispensary on Serpentine St. near the present Fire Hall. Later on, about 1901, Dr. Thobold Coleman assumed complete charge and had an office and dispensary in his residence located on the corner of Granite and Park St. West, near the present Hospital. During the winter of 1901 an outbreak of smallpox caused the genial doctor to establish strict quarantine and compulsory vaccination in town, also the use of an Isolation or Pest House on the outskirts of Shantytown. A few deaths occurred from the epidemic, which waned after a few weeks.

Dr. Coleman was ably assisted during this epidemic by his wife, Kathleen Blake Coleman, better known under the pen name of "Kit," who was the writer of "Woman's Kingdom" in the "Mail and Empire" of Toronto. Born at "Castle Blakeney," in the west of Ireland, in 1864, and educated at Dublin and Brussels, she came to Canada in 1890, and entered a journalistic career with Saturday Night; she was the only woman correspondent for the New York Times in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898-99.

About 1903 the Company started building a hospital on the present hospital site, of wooden construction, Swiss chalet style, and opened later in charge of Dr. Gibson with Miss Mary E. Dame as matron. Dr. Gibson was later succeeded by Dr. W. C. Morrison, until 1910, when the late Dr. W. A. McCauley, who died in 1906, assumed charge. In 1911 this hospital was destroyed by fire, rebuilt fireproof in 1913, and remains today in charge of Dr. Harold F. Mowat, F.R.C.S.