

Name of Interviewer: Joanna Stubinski      April 5, 1972

Interview:      3 hrs.

1. Mrs. Mike Cunningham

2. Mame

3.      Pigeon

4.      Miller Ave

5.      679-5684

6.      74

7.      Renfrew, Ontario

8.      Mother in Renfrew

Father in Ossials, near Douglas, Ontario

9.      Ottawa Valley

10.     Moved up from North Bay, went to Haileybury first in 1912

Married in 1916, lived at Kerr Lake then moved into Cobalt in 1917

11.     Train

12.     T.N.N.O.

13.     4 children and her mother and father

14.     Worked at Mining Corp. was a steel sharpener, then O'Brien Mine for 30 yrs.

15.     Worked in Haileybury office work for Adshead

16.     Retired

17, Retired

18.     Exciting way of life, spent most of her time in Cobalt

19.     Busy place, about 10,000 people with the mining camps, pushed your way through crowds.

20.     Because it was a new country with plenty of work and because her father came

21.     Mining, office staff, miners and mechanics and blacksmith.

22. Adshead's from 8 to 5

23.     \$6.00 a week in Haileybury

24.     Mother lived in North Cobalt, Mame in Haileybury in a big wooden house when married went to Kerr Lake. It was a busy place even streetcars went in. General Store.

Here they lived in a big house for 2 months then bought a little shack from Danny Hellen's mother for about \$50.00

25.     Always went to her mothers in Haileybury

26.     At Kerr Lake, went to the pump and used rain Barrels

27, coal oil lamps at Kerr Lake when moved into town Hydro

28.     wood stove

29.     heated with coal

30.     All kinds of stores, even people from New Liskeard came down shopping. Every sat. night Mame and a few ladies went shopping. This was their Saturday night entertainment

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THESE WERE SOME OF THE STORES IN1924.

31. My husband went to Blind Pig where Bill Fraboni lives.  
If you wanted to buy a bottle of liquor you had to be married to send out for it. Brought a case of gin from Montreal for \$12.  
Held the dances in the cookeries. Met her husband at a dance at the Shamrock Mine.  
After the dance would go back by sleigh to Haileybury get in a 6 a.m.  
After they were married, they would take Clarence, the baby in a cutter to the dance.  
Mike finished work walked home 2 miles washed and changed and walked back 2 miles to the dance.

32. just went to the games

33. no

34. Went to Business College in the Bay.
  35. Street cars, Trains, Horse and buggy
  36. Dr. Mitchell
  37. Very good, mines Hospital very competent, Mike in with flu Annie in for 2 1/2 yrs.
  38. Clarence born at Haileybury Hospital Len, only one born at home
  39. Len and Wilf went to university both mining engineers Clarence 20 Annie and Audrey 19
  40. Clarence in Belleterre Len and Wilf out West with Canadian Engineer Audrey Telephone Officer Annie, Mining Office.
  41. Mines were busy and all in operation
  42. A lot of contests up at the ball park north cobalt. Was the best place for contests
  43. Heavy meals always ate lots of meat, vegetables and desserts
  44. Same as today
  45. Housedresses, dressed up, when went out skirts, blouses, no slacks.
  46. Dressed up, but always changed after mass
  47. Went to Mass, played cards all afternoon, mostly euchre.
  48. Mothers things all burnt in Fire 1922
  49. Just like to place
  50. Because so many of her friends are here
  51. A lot of improvements made, but like the look of it better in early yrs. as it added character to the town.
  52. no
  53. no
  - 54.
  - 55, yes
  56. Mines working and town busier more work
  57. Summer, always goes south to Florida in the winter
  58. Playing cards going out to teas and visiting travel
  59. playing bingo, and sewing
  60. The Government will definitely have to step in, Because it will take a lot of money
  61. Tourists
  62. Museum, Tours, Scenery, Hunting and fishing
- Mame was mayor of Cobalt from 1962-67

Joanna Stubinski PAPER CLIPPINGS April 6, 1972

ADD TO MRS. MIKE CUNNINGHAM'S INTERVIEW 2 1/2 hrs.

Cobalt's first woman mayor, 63 yrs. old. Mrs. Mamie Cunningham, became the first woman to wear Cobalt's traditional silver chain of office. The chain is made of 14 silver nuggets taken from local mines.

Mrs. Cunningham and a six man council were officially sworn in to office yesterday in a ceremony at the town office. George St. Hilaire, placed the traditional chain around

the lady mayor's neck at the beginning of a year which will see. Cobalt celebrated its 60th anniversary. She became the first woman mayor in 60 yrs. of municipal history. Prior to her election she served on council for one year.

Wearing the silver chain of office is becoming somewhat a family tradition for Mrs. Cunningham. At 29 yrs. of age her son-in-law, John Damiani, became the country's youngest mayor and served a three yrs. term of office before leaving the political field about 5 yrs. ago.

The chain she now has won the right to wear is actually valued at a little more than \$7.00 but ranks high in sentimental value to Cobalt whose community has been dubbed "The Cradle of Canadian Mining". It is considered one of the most unusual marks of the mayoral rank in the world. A couple of yrs. ago when the mines loaned it to the Ont. Dept. of Mines as part of their display at the Canadian National Ex. it was insured for the sum of \$10,000. The council elected was Jake Koza, Hugh Armstrong, Joseph Robitaille, Reddi Tessolini, Jack McGarry and Gus Nadeau. Born in Renfrew County, Mrs. Cunningham has lived here for 46 yrs. She is a member of the C. W. League, and Cobalt, Haileybury, Curling Club, She and her husband Michael who was employed in a local mine, have 3 sons and 2 daughters.

At her inauguration Mrs. Cunningham gave a strong hint as to some of the most important highlights of the coming yrs. in municipal circles, and said "It is an honor to have been inaugurated and in this our anniversary yrs. I am pleased to have such a good council and feel sure that if we pull together and really work hard for the betterment of our town we will accomplish something. Among our many problems will be the policing of the town. This will have to be discussed at our next meeting. Steps should be taken at an early date to collect areas of taxes. We must keep working towards a settlement of the property problem. In the north end of town, as well as toward an easement Branch of the Ontario Municipal Board. I hope our meetings will be harmonious and no swearing please. Councilors, unless they have business in the town office should not make a practice of dropping in and taking up the time of the staff. Re. Father Ovila Lemay, Cobalt said a blessing over the 1963 council and its committees were announced yesterday.

## COBALT'S MAYOR

Soon the town of Cobalt will be electing its mayor, and we think that most of the people in the Silvertown will agree that their present chief magistrate should be returned without even the formality of an election.

For Mamie Cunningham, as mayor, has had more success in awakening Canada to the importance of the old silver camp than any previous mayor within our remembrance. She was aided, it is true, by the ballyhoo that attended the Jubilee celebrations, but her work did not stop with the fireworks that ended the celebrations.

During the hectic 15 days in August Mayor Cunningham grasped the lapels of many important persons who visited the town and district and heard and remembered their promises and since that time she has made many visits to the Queen City to see that the promises were implemented. She is clever, talented and persuasive as well as being a very pleasant and womanly woman. Cobalt should make sure she is re-elected.

Dead Man Gets 17 Votes

A candidate for town council whose election day death notice was posted in all polling stations received 17 votes here in Municipal elections Monday.

Officials pasted a death notice for Stanley Crago, 74, an hour after balloting started. He was one of 12 candidates for six council seats.

Mayor Mamie Honored by the United Church

In an unprecedented move Temiskaming Presbytery of the United Church has appointed a Roman Catholic as a corresponding member. The honor was accorded Mayor Mamie Cunningham of Cobalt, when the Presbytery held its annual meeting in Cobalt last Week. Mrs. Cunningham is now entitled to take part in debates, but cannot vote on Church matters.

Rev. H. L. Wipprech of Cobalt United Church commented that as far as he knows this is the first appointment of its kind ever made.

Sometimes I wonder how I ever did get into this, quipped Mrs. Mamie Cunningham, mayor of Cobalt, as she spoke of the job.

Mrs. Cunningham, one of Ontario's two women mayors, says she finds the job of running, The Silver City thrilling and rewarding.

An enthusiastic leader of an all sale council, Mrs. Cunningham spoke of some of the problems she has to tackle, the greatest of which is providing houses to cope with Cobalt's recent influx of mining personnel.

Mrs. Cunningham defeated 2 male candidates in the mayoralty race and jokingly said I was pretty pleased to beat the men.

Few Towns, she said can boast the romance and excitement of Cobalt, which although it looks beat up and dusty, has played an important and unique part to the development of Canada

Mrs. Cunningham's husband, Michael whom she married in Haileybury 38 yrs. ago is agreeable] to her holding office. Although he has no political ambitions himself, he is pleased that his wife is mayor. She added that he is quite capable of getting himself a meal if I'm not there.

Following an address Mrs. Cunningham donned her chain of office, of pure silver leaf from the first producing mine in Cobalt.

The Advice to women eager to take a stab at politics; Get into it. Its' a very rewarding experience. It keeps you going, and sometimes these luncheons make it a bit hard on the waistline, but it's worth it Mayor Mamie loves to tell about the good old days when the first silver vein was discovered in this gateway to the mineral riches of the north. She delights in putting on her heavy chain of office, made from rough slabs of leaf-silver, the first mined in Cobalt; we polished it up when I took over as Mayor. Like the many jobs of running a town it is heavy to wear but the weight is well distributed around my shoulders.

Joanna Stubinski NEWS CLIPPINGS April 10, 1972

ADD TO MRS. CUNNINGHAMS INTERVIEW

Cobalt: Silver Memories

Should nostalgia or curiosity take you up to Cobalt's 60th Anniversary blow out chanter are you will catch that adventure to mining camp opulence. The Cobalt Song. It was written in 1919 at the height of an era that saw Cobalt with 104 producing silver



properties. Dividends of more than \$100, 00,000. The Lawson with its Silver Sidewalk at 12,000 ounces to the ton, the Lyric Theatre and Beatrice Lillie, and a team in the National hockey League. Of course if you push these glories of the past too hard, especially in such emporiums of amber optimism as the Miners Home Public House, you are liable to get a punch in the mouth. This is more likely if you choose to enlighten long time Cobalters of the breed of Cecil Birtch is a mechanic of profane splendor who can knock out a set of worn kingpins in a trice. By choice, Mr. Birtch is a volunteer fireman and Cobalt of today champion.

Not that Cobalt is a belligerent town. On the contrary and despite numerous boasts of richness to rags, it retains an inimitable ability to look in the bright side and to pass along this cheeriness to you.

Thus it is appropriate that Cobalt should have a song of its very own. The town has no intention of letting the glass of 50 yrs. ago rub off. even though sales of outside paint must surely be the lowest per capita in Canada and its contribution to national architecture confined to an abandoned mine shaft running through the centre of a grocery store.

Cobalt has made its mark in an more tangible way, it is the cradle and well spring of Canadian Mining and anvil on which was hammered out the rough cast of a 'national identity. With its silver, it still exports much of its talent. Yet it keeps the progeny of its worldwide magnetism. The Armstrongs, Audettes, Baxter's, Chitaroni's, Damianis, De Vries, Todd's Tressider and Yanyks.

I remember Cobalt. I remember it in a maudlin way, true, since I spent pretty girl at a fires are always social events, especially in winter when the town can get a bit dull. The North Bay nugget had its branch office on Lang St in a battered frame building. Nearly all the buildings on Lang St. are battered over the years they have heaved a collective sigh and settled onto their bedrock like weary revelers at the burlesque show. But the office overlooked the famous Square with its monument to Dr. Willet Green Miller who Read the Secret of the Rocks. After Fred Larose threw that hammer at a fox hack in 1903. The square is Cobalt's stage and even the reruns are fascinating. Over at the fire hall, Jiggs Saumier and Red McEwen wield away the fireless hours discussing with authority common to their calling, everything from the Korean War to the Current market lapse or why the fellow up the street really left home at 3 a.m. and sober at the Jiggs has since become a Provincial Police officer.

Larry Stadelman would, drive through the Square in his 1927 Buick, leaving his book store to seek the latest stock exchange chatter in Haileybury and New Liskeard.

Prospector Jack Armstrong would hold forth in front of Costello's drug store allowing only fires, two-car crashes and new strikes to interrupt his theme. Snugged down in heavy canvas coat, a cigar jutting as a smoke signal to prosperity, one-time teamster Harry Miller would cross the Square and head into the Post Office Harry ramrodded the Silver Miller and for my money was the founder of the New Cobalt.

Inside, there would be a business life greeting from Mayor E. J. Holland, postmaster, imperious authority on the art of smoking a cigarette with a long holder, and winner of the Victoria Cross following a machine gun encounter in World War 1

From his second-floor office there was a wave from William Inch, O. C. once a week Sour would accompany Bill Inch to Haileybury, there to do legal battle against the unswerving horse sense of magistrate Atkinson and the bluster of Crown Attorney

Walters. There was the time Bill beat an assault charge when he proved his client had only one foot inside the Good Food Grill, and therefore couldn't have been in the place. If you needed a hammer a bracket, a pot or pan, there was Tommy Block the only hardware merchant, who bucked his own business. But you'd butt it, anyway you needed it.

The sound truck swinging into the square that Mr. Giachino behind the wheel. No one knew his first name. He ran a travel agency. See This World before the Next was his slogan, and promoted it by showing films.

The Big Man in the Jeep station wagon would be geologist Ralph Benner. He didn't do too well with his Silver Banner, but he made up for it a few yrs. later at Consolidated Denison in Elliot Lake.

Bob Sopha was the fellow with the casual manner and benign expression. He could fill you in on the political scene or where the fish were biting or the deer running. His brother Elmer, got to be M.P.P. Bob is happy as a hotel inspector.

If you booked in at the Fraser House you would meet Mrs. Abraham. The first time I got a room there she fixed me with a knowing eye and said remember no parties.

But there will always be parties in Cobalt. They're not having the ball they once had, but higher silver prices and mines such as Deer Horn, Glen Lake, Silver Summit and Agnico have again put the bloom back on Cobalt. The Best Old Town.

#### COBALT MAY HAVE LADY MAYOR

Councilor Cunningham Tosses Hat into Ring Politics of Cobalt has taken a new turn with the chances of a lady mayor. Councilor Mame Cunningham said that she will probably stand for mayor in the municipal election.

If I can see a state of good men or women running for council then I will allow my Mame to stand for mayor.

Mrs. Cunningham said that she has lived in Cobalt for 38 yrs. and owns property in the town.

I have a good deal of time to spare, and don't have to worry about what anyone thinks she added, Mrs. Cunningham has served on the Town Council for the past year. Mrs. Anne Purdy is the other woman member of the Council. Mrs. Cunningham said that she would not mind seeing more women on the Council, when you look at our empty stores, large areas, lack of new buildings and very costly administration. I believe that the women in this town could certainly do no worse and night well do better.

Cobalt is at the centre of a very active mining area but nothing is beige done mining area but nothing is being done to encourage new industry or business or home building in the town, she added.

This was the last recipe in Mame's Cook Book

How To Preserve a Husband

Be careful in your selection. Do not choose too young, and take only such as have been reared in a good moral atmosphere.

When once decided upon, let that part remain forever settled, and give your entire thought to preparation for domestic use.

Some insights on keeping them in a pickle, while others are constantly getting them into hot water.

This only makes them sour hard, and sometimes glitter.  
Even poor varieties may be made sweet tender, and good by garnishing them with  
patience.

Well sweetened with smiles and flavored with kisses to taste.  
Then wrap them in a mantle of charity, keep warm with a steady fire of domestic  
devotion,  
and serve with peaches and cream. When thus prepared will keep for yrs.  
Aunt Hannah