

Lucy Damiani May 9, 1972

7:30 - 10:00

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2. same
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8. single
9. 49 years

10. Cobalt has lagged between a depressed area for some years. Education facilities are much improved since education has become a primary concern both on the provincial level as well as Federally. Regional schools now offer better facilities and more modern aids (i.e.; visual aids) students are definitely motivated by what they see. The educational system has improved extensively in this direction. The explosion of bussing school students still leaves a great deal of organization. Perhaps it is because the area per se of population is too vast too large. However it is too soon to be critical of Regional schools, because of bussing educational facilities and the curriculum offered to the students I believe compensate for the many sacrifices made both on the taxpayer and the students themselves. When I attended school it was a great burden on my parents and the rest of the family. Books were costly and during the depression years, money was not as available. Now the books and supplies are no longer the worry of the student, but the school activities in the school then were few and some-times only after school. Activities now are a school participation everyone benefits. The economic situation in Cobalt has been due to low key in mining. Silver which is the primary metal has dropped in price in the last year and the mines in the area have been compelled to close. The area gets a boost when there is some construction going on. When the Hydro project at Lower Notch being built it created a lot of work for people in Cobalt and area and Cobalt certainly was better economically. Of course when the project came to an end many were unemployed and the mines were not hiring as before. Secondary industries would be necessary to aid the economy not only for Cobalt but for the entire North. High freight rates are highly detrimental to developing the north. Job opportunities are few. The labour force is mainly connected with mining. There are a few government jobs available in the area but there are seldom vacancies.

Training. and wages in the industries stores, offices, and other outlets are mostly inadequate. Larger percent of the jobs that are available are very low pay.

There are few jobs in civic provincial federal etc. but to get these you have to know someone who knows someone. The majority of office workers in the area are underpaid. When in training you receive even less. Many places exploit your skills and knowledge because they claim training period is anywhere from 6 months to 2 years. Then to the majority of offices are far too busy to train you properly and you learn by doing. Salary in such an instance is below the standard requirement. The exploitation of on the job training is not a new one.

But we are all victims of it sometime or other. Working conditions in some places of business in the area and adequate while some places are not. There I am working I

wonder how come there is never any inspection by the Labour Department especially when a representative lives only a few miles away. Other places are continually harassed by inspection every six months or once a year. Recommendations are suggested and these must be met. Where I am now working there is no break in the morning or afternoon. We work right through with one half hour for lunch. Your lunch is eaten on a small space next to the door leading to the toilet. In summer the odour is worse than in winter. Heating facilities are very inadequate in the building. It leaves a great deal to be desired as may seem exaggerated to some people because both Mr. & Mrs. Pollard exude such a High public image.

#### City Facilities

Few people are exposed to as many opportunities as we have available. Transportation facilities are adequate. Many people own cars and the complex of the three towns lend a great deal of expansion. The city can offer such uncluttered highways and no overcrowding in population. Shopping in Cobalt is fair prices are high. Adult education is offered at the Secondary schools in area. Also by Haileybury school of mines. We have a group of artists in the area and several classes are offered in art ceramics, sculpture and pottery.

The Cobalt Art Club is affiliated with the Northern Ontario Art Association. The association has a great expansion embracing most of the Northern Communities going westerly to Sault Ste. Marie. They have two or three major showings a year, which are exhibited at the different communities. The pictures are abjudicated by two prominent artists from museums in the cities of Southern Ontario. Any member is allowed to enter two in each exhibition providing they meet the specifications to size, framing etc.

Caroline McArthur is the NOAA (Northern Ontario Art Association) representative for the Cobalt Art Club,

They also sponsor an Art colony every year and this summer once again, Cobalt will be the site. Mr. Gus Wiseman is expected for the week's course. One of our top Canadian artists.

Many talented artists have contributed to the area. Mrs. Olive McArthur, Jack Burton; both of Cobalt, Mrs. Muriel Smith and Miss Muriel Newton-White, both of Haileybury. A little industry has developed from the local Arts, and Crafts. The Cobalt Pottery Shop under the direction of Bernardo Sembrano, Bruce Verity and Jack Burton. Most interesting aspect of this group is they have experimental with using local clay and local dyes, and have been very successful. Recreational Facilities are varied. We have the bowling organization composed of Ladies, Men's and mixed teams. The burling club in Haileybury offers an enjoyable sport for a minimal fee compared to the city versions. There is the local arena for ice skating with artificial ice. Hockey games are played all winter by the youngsters in the Leagues public skating is offered for adults three to four nights

a week. Snowmobiling has become very popular and the opportunities for trails are endless and are p just a few feet from home. Skiing facilities I would say are excellent for this area. A newly built complex that is only about ten years is situated in the Lorrain Valley - only about 7 miles from North Cobalt. The pomolife facilities are good. The hills are well groomed and excellent for every skier regardless of ability. Something for both the beginner and the expert. The mountain has a vast area of trails, the trails about 2100

feet. Instruction I also offered by the Mining School students to adults and children every week end.

Sports. Organized sports. Cobalt has always been very active in sports. I can remember when Mrs. Claude O'Shaughnessy first started a Ladies Bowling League in 1942 or 1943 with the help of Miss Gladys Murphy they organized a Ladies Bowling league. There were at the time 8 teams in the league and I was bowling for Laurette's (a hairdresser now living in Haileybury - Mrs. Zanin)

In the early years we had hockey teams and skating in winter in the old arena across from St. Pat's rectory. The roof collapsed one winter because of the heavy snow and it was a few years later the present rink was built on Argentite Street. When Jack Staley came from Toronto to work at the Imperial Bank in Cobalt sometime around 1947 he got together an interested group who wanted to learn badminton, With this he organized the Cobalt Badminton Club and he was instrumental in organizing tournaments with other clubs out of town. Soon the Club flourished and at one time it had as many as 50 paid up members. We held socials and tournaments as well. It was a great sport and enjoyed by many adults. Thanks to Jack Stanley. Up until a few years ago the Club on a smaller scale was still active. Skiing is perhaps one of our greatest winter sports. I can remember before a Ski Club was organized. We would ski out to the Colonial Hill and even around O'Brien what was then known as the Violet Mine. There were a few enthusiasts and and it wasn't too long before a club was formed. Mr. Leo Gough was to be the organizer who got the project underway. A mining man living in Haileybury who knew the area well started a Club at Cross Lake and by built a Chalet on a rock pile overlooking the lake. It flourished for many years and Mr. & Mrs. Bond of Haileybury became bona fide members donating time and money to keep the club going. There were parties held and soon electricity was installed, thanks to

Jim England of New Liskeard. In a community such as this everyone co-operated and donated their time to keep the Club going. The paths were a bit narrow but it made excellent skiing. There were only two major trait and in those days only a rope tow but to many of us it was skiing at its best. The Chalet was nearly always full of Chalet skiers who came to watch. When electricity was installed night skiing was initiated two nights a week and if you were a member you could use these privileges. This was in the 501s and Leo Gough was the one who made it all possible? Many skiers still remember how a small group kept the Ski Club operating. Later Mike Kosiailka who was posted in this area with Children's Aid (sometime about 1961) and visualized this dream of the new site where the Tri-Town Ski Club now stands. It was Mike who cleared the mountains and organized a commercial Ski area that operates to-day as Tri-Town ski club formerly known as St. Bernard Ski Club. In the summer we have the many fresh water lakes for fishing and swimming. Five miles south of Cobalt we have Bass Lake a project of the Kiwanis Club. Wonderful swimming with a good Sandy Beach. It is also a camping area with cottages to rent for tents. The late Mr. Larry Stadelman was a great sportsman and it was through this man's generosity that many of the Cobalt people now can enjoy a wonderful lake with all the facilities for picnics, swimming, boating and other water sports.

When we were youngsters we would walk a couple of miles to Peterson Lake about two miles in on the O'Brien Property road. It was wonderful for us, and many enjoyed the swimming hole, until the mine started working and polluted the Lake. But we did enjoy it

for a good many years. On the more intellectual side there are evening courses offered at the Secondary Schools in the area. Adults who wish to become better informed or learn certain skills are certainly encouraged. It is hoped that the directors on the Board of Education will foresee all the wonderful opportunities open for the schools, when they are no longer in use, during the summer months, to put them to use and have work shops or courses during the summer. They have been very --successful in other areas there is no reason why Cobalt should not be considered  
Because of length of interview with more history forthcoming the remainder of this report will be procured at a later date.

Lucy Damiani June 6, 1972

#### ADD TO TERESA DAMIANI INTERVIEW

Changes in Cobalt I would like to see and I believe they will come about before long. There are already signs of change to add to this, beguiling atmospheric contrast of tar paper mine shafts and the dated contrast the freedom of nature.

The Lions Club are to be commended for their interest in Cobalt and their worthwhile projects, such as the installation of artificial ice in the Cobalt arena, their participation in Festival, sponsoring a Winter Carnival, which is always very interesting and of course their recent endeavour of the Park on scenic Cobalt Lake. The Kiwanis Club for their project at Bass Lake, a summer attraction.

The many industries and businesses that have flourished in the past will be an incentive for more in the future.

Tourism could become one of the main attractions for -promoting more businesses and creating an interest throughout Canada.

Perhaps someday in the near future there will be a solution to the high cost of freight. However things change at such acceleration that some of these could well be generated to this area, particularly Cobalt.

The Recreation Committee, has been very successful in Cobalt and created interest in different phases of recreation particularly on the artistic side, However, I feel that the sports in general have been neglected in this direction. There has been no motivation in this direction, except in hockey in Winter and swimming in summer, which existed long before the Recreation Director

was hired. I would like to see such sports as tennis, lacrosse, badminton, and skiing promoted to a higher degree.

Perhaps I am being a little too critical about the different sports, but it is because I am keenly interested in them.

I also enjoy reading as recreation and I have a few collections of early first Canadian editions, which I prize very dearly.

The family has two prints of Picasso. Although these are only prints they are of some value being the work of this famous artist.