



Mr. Schalm in front of white-shirted guy - he has a flat hat on.

River, about 1/2 mile from the river. He also said the rock from this quarry was largely used in Winnipeg for ornamental stone. Being comparatively soft it "dressed" readily and "finished" well and when burnt, produced a very white lime.

According to J.H. Panton, the second quarry at East Selkirk was about 1/2 mile northwest of the quarry just mentioned and situated nearer to the Town on the West side of the track.

A. McCharles made mention that he had been collecting fossils from the East Selkirk Quarries since 1882 and that he had found many coral specimens as well as Trilobites and the snails were common and he found one over 9" in diameter and exceptionally well preserved. Another snail that was found by McCharles was 7" long with 10 rings. As for Cuttlefish, he located many of enormous size. In 1884 the Manitoba Free Press reported a Cuttle-Fish 107" long was obtained from one of the quarries in the area.



Burning lime on the banks of Cooks Creek.



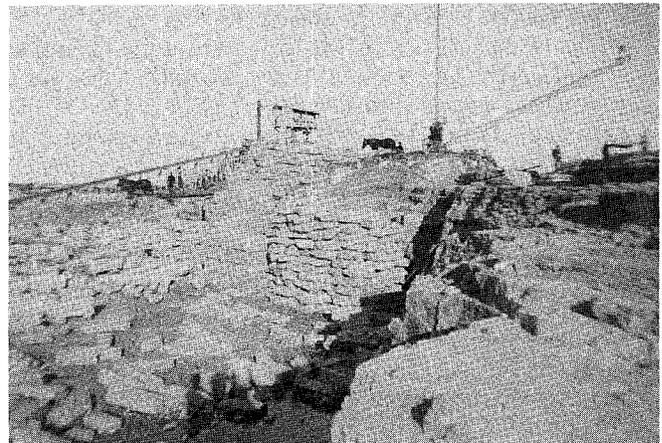
The quarries were still in operation when visited by these two gentlemen in 1882 and 1886, because they make mention of having talked to the men working there.

Some reference has been made to a quarry in East Selkirk called the Galena Limestone Quarry which was in operation in 1884. However, the exact location of this quarry is unknown.

According to Parks (1916) another quarry, owned by Mrs. H. Nelson, operated in East Selkirk and was located on Lot 70 (1.4 hectares of) adjoining Mrs. Nelson's quarry to the northwest was another quarry at one time operated by the Notre Dame Investment Co. also located on part of Lot 70.

On the Sir Wlm. Van Horne farm were more quarries comprising large acreage both to the east and the south of the preceding quarries.

According to J.W. Wells, there was a quarry located in the Village of East Selkirk about .4 km. from the CPR spur line which was worked to produce lime and rubble, and was locally known as the Hicks Quarry. McCharles described the location of the quarry he visited as being "then on 5/6-13-6E about 8.0 km. to the SE of the CPR station, there is a natural exposure of similar strata, in two small hopper-shaped holes close to each other at the junction of a low marsh with one of the gravel ridges that are so common in that locality." "The stone is thinner bedded and therefore is broken into smaller blocks. This



outcrop is seldom worked as it is usually under water in ordinary seasons." (The Dept. of Mines and Natural Resources refer to it as Lots 75/76 and 13-5E in NTS Area 621/2 NW-STN 7). The Van Horne Farm quarry is described as being south of the farm and 0.8 km. east of the other two quarries.

The final quarry we could locate any information on was on the Emmert Farm about 6.4 km. east of East Selkirk, but of less importance than the others.

It would appear then that stone was being worked in the East Selkirk Quarries from 1878/79 with a peak in 1884 to 1887 but that no quarrying of any large scale was attempted much after 1900. One of the newspapers (Selkirk Weekly Record) reported in May 1909: "that R.S. Hourston of Winnipeg stated that the stone quarries of East Selkirk are to be opened up again."

Time and space does not allow us to elaborate any further on these industries. We share with you a few photographs and a small diagram showing at least four of the quarries in the Village.

In conclusion, it would appear that most all of the building stone being processed came from East Selkirk up until the time it became fashionable to use the tyndall stone being quarried at Garson in 1895, and the John Gunn Quarry in 1898. The Malmstron Quarry was operating from 1889 but on a small scale, as was the Cutter, Little, Flett and Hazel Quarries prior to 1895. The Sinclair Quarry (1905) was adjacent to the Mangar's and Gerards Quarry.

When the Brokenhead Munc. formed in Nov. of 1900, many of the preceding fell within their incorporated boundary.

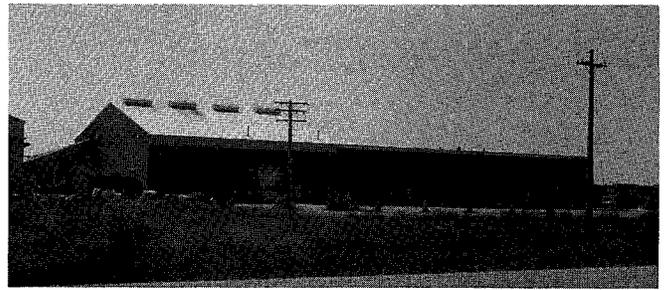
For an up to date record of the mineral resources of the Rural Municipality of St. Clements, please refer to the development plan of the Selkirk and District Planning Area Board. There you will find data of present day as well as some historical, covering our area. The preceding brief history outlines data not contained therein.

RED RIVER BRICK AND TILE

submitted by slh

St. Clements has the only Brick making plant in Manitoba. It has been stated that "Brick is the oldest manufactured building material known to man." The earliest known manufacture and use of brick can be dated at about 6800 B.C. from the ancient Jericho ruins.

The clays and shales of Manitoba are quite extensive and widespread throughout the province and have supported the ceramic industry dating back to the 1870's. It would appear that 1871 was one of the first attempts at brick making near Omand's Creek with the first "plant" credited to Dr. Schultz, for the making of common brick. In 1879 the Sutherland and Brydon plant was producing pottery in our area here while at least three plants were in operation in and around Winnipeg by 1886, we had 6 plants in operation in Manitoba because plants had been opened up at Emerson, Portage la Prairie and Rapid City. From 1908-1913 was a boom period with 33 plants producing common brick at the rate of 25 to 87 million. Burning was mainly done in Kilns using dry wood as fuel



Red River Brick and Tile Plant.

while a few had down draft kilns and used coal.

In 1915 we only had 12 plants in the province and from 1915 to 1929 could be called our slow period, it dwindled away to about 5 to 7. During the depression years from about 1929 to 1933 only 4 plants survived. One of the survivors was the Wardrop plant at Whitemouth. From 1939 to 1945 found only 1 plant, the Alsips, in operation. After that many started up and failed for one reason or another, and then there was none.

Following exhaustive clay prospecting in Manitoba and extensive market research during the early 1960's a decision was reached to build a brick plant on the east side of the Red River, near Lockport, in the R.M. of St. Clements. The development of suitable raw materials for this plant was begun in 1962 and in 1963 drilling programs were carried out in the search for the needed clays and further drilling in 1969-1970 for reserve clay supplies to justify the commencing of this industry.

The Red River Brick and Tile Co. built their plant on Hwy. No. 44 just east of Lockport and opened for business and production in Oct. 1970/71. It had the capacity of producing 20 million finished bricks annually, and represented an investment of well over the \$2 million mark.

This plant used clays from at least five different pits: St. Rose du Lac, Ladywood has 2 pits, Morden and Odanah. The Ste. Rose pit is 185 miles from the plant, Ladywood about 28 miles and the latter two require at least 100 miles of travel to the plant.

These five pits give the Brick Company 8 types of clays and shales to work from which produces the face colours ranging from near black and red to near white, including variegated colours.

For record purposes, so that the next generation will not have to research data source, the Brokenhead pit is located just east of Ladywood and is near the Brokenhead River on the West bank.

The other Brokenhead pit is a small pit containing good clean silica sand and lies just off municipal highway No. 317, nearly mid-way between highways No. 12 and No. 59.

All the clay is generally mined and stockpiled at the pit site and then hauled by truck to the plant where they can turn out about 55,000 bricks per day.

In 1974 the plant underwent modification and expansion with the addition of important equipment installations.

As of 1983, this is the only brick plant in full operation

within the Province of Manitoba. It is a division of 1. XL Industries Ltd.

Other plants operating within the province number only 5 and they produce cement, expanded aggregate products as well as dry and activated Bentonite.

The Red River Brick and Tile are the only Fire and Pressed Face Bricks company operating within Manitoba and they chose our munc. because St. Clements was an ideal location close to railroad and major transport routes. The relationship between the company and the munc. has always been ideal and the clean environment orders have been minimal because they run a clean shop operation.

Rumours that the Company plan a major move of operation to Alberta has not resulted in any firm decision by officials and the plant continues to function as before.

The East Selkirk area had at least five brick plants in operation west of Cook's Creek, running toward the Red River. They were doing a booming business during the late 1870's. The Roundhouse was built from this brick and most of the brick used in the Town of Selkirk.

C.I.L.

submitted by Sam Rowley

Sam Rowley was the first Plant Foreman at the C.I.L. explosives plant in St. Clements and had also worked brushing and clearing the property in the early 1930's, some years prior to them erecting buildings. Sam recalls that when they built the buildings they were placed far apart and had sand enclosing them, so that if there was an explosion that it would blow straight up, rather than spread sideways. The first Plant Manager was a gentleman called Mr. Dean Irvine.

Sam relates that you had to change into your work clothes on the job site and the company supplied the clothing, even the steel toed safety boots. When you finished work you had to strip and shower before putting your own clothing back on at the end of the shift. The company laundered and supplied all clothing used on the job.

The company allowed no smoking, matches or lighters on the site nor cameras. If you were caught ignoring the safety rules or regulations you could "get fired right on the spot", said Sam. If you wanted a smoke, you had to wait for your lunch break and then go down to the end building (main office) for your cigarette etc.

"You had to really know what you were doing in that place," Sam said. For instance you were not supposed to run, you had to move slowly and be especially careful when you were shovelling where the shells were mixed and made.

Sam says the women who worked at the plant filling up shells, picking and boxing them in 50 lb. crates for shipping by boat and CNR were great workers. It was good for us having ladies about, made us watch our language and actions.

It was called Brainerd Siding and we used to also load boats and launches as well as barges down on the Red River. Taking explosives to the mines up towards Bad Throat (Manigatogan) and on the east side of Lake

Winnipeg.

As far as the CIL Buildings go, there was the big garage and then the main office, the mixing house, the cartridge house and the four magazines where you put your powder.

The CNR tracks came right into the compound. I remember that the CNR used to ruin hay crops and the sparks flying from the engines used to cause fires and us a lot of concern.

Sam remembers travelling to Nobel to look at the new explosives operations and techniques and also going to Calgary, to work on the new explosives Plant there. The Calgary operation ceased about 1 1/2 years ago, mostly all of it was demolished in 1978/79.

When asked about the 1945 explosion at the Brainerd Siding Plant, Sam says, "That was a puzzler" -- "I was down at the other end at the time. There were three people killed. It was very sad and made a terrible stir in the community at the time."

In conclusion, Sam mentioned that the procedure when you close down an explosives area you set up explosives in strategic positions and set it off and this more or less clears the area so that further use of the land can be planned in relative safety.

Sam's memory is sharp, and he has no problem remembering people, places, and events.

C-I-L INC. "BRAINERD WORKS"

submitted by CIL/slh

The C-I-L contact dates back to the early part of 1929 when a Mr. Loftus of the firm "Aikins, Loftus and Aikins" approached the Council of the Municipality of St. Clements to discuss the purchase of a 1200 acre tract of land just south of the Village of East Selkirk. By August, 1929, Mr. Loftus stated they (CIL) intended erecting buildings and a plant for the purpose of manufacturing explosives of all kinds. They had considerable discussion regarding assessment. Mr. Loftus suggested that C-I-L be assessed at the 1929 land value rate in the area while the proposed buildings should be exempt, same as farm buildings. Council felt C-I-L should get some concessions but that exemption was asking for too much consideration. Finally, a resolution was passed fixing the C-I-L assessment at \$100,000 for a period of 12 years with the company to pay 100% for school purposes and 40% for municipal.

Also at this time Council agreed to close up the road on Lot 97 (Parish of St. Clements) and sell same to C-I-L for \$100 per acre, and St. Clements was to pay for all improvements, about \$300. It was then that St. Clements agreed to move the two-mile road east to the CPR, with the C-I-L to pay the difference in acreage (\$50 per acre) as well as survey and legal costs to get the legislation passed to ratify council's action.

By early January, 1930 By-law No. 402 was read to authorize an agreement between CIL and the municipality of St. Clements with respect to a "certain industry" to be established in the municipality.

Nothing much happened during 1930 and toward the end of Sept. of that year a committee of Council was



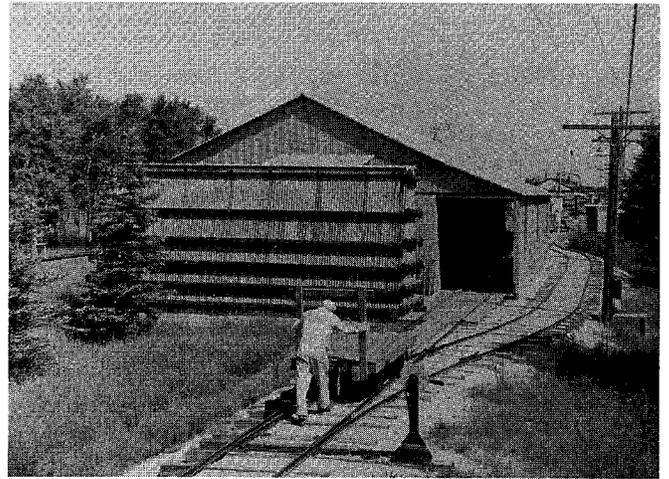
Left to Right: Joe Ritchie, Harvey McNeill, Bill Rokosh and Bill Hartevelt at CIL.

formed to meet with C-I-L with the view of "getting them to put contract into effect" ... In a memo to Mr. Loftus dated Oct. 24, 1930 the Council urged C-I-L to commence construction as soon as possible as the unemployment situation in St. Clements was very acute and they were looking forward to some relief from the C-I-L works. Thos. Bunn, Sec-Treas. of the municipality also informed Mr. J.S. Morrey of CIL of the urgency and need of work in this area and that he had contacted the Star Hotel in East Selkirk and the hotel was prepared to lodge at least 12 men. The Board and Room would be at the rate of \$9.00 per week, per man. Thos. Bunn also stated that the company should have started operation about Sept. 15 and that it was going to be a very difficult winter for many people to make a living. The company had commenced brushing and clearing earlier in 1930 but by 1931 (and in view of the business and financial conditions facing it) was unable to start the plant or operations. Because the agreement stated it would start earlier, C-I-L paid a penalty of \$2,500 for an extension of time on the agreement and starting date. This was 1% based on the initial plant investment of some \$250,000.

Mr. Loftus, still representing CIL interests, returned to Council each year asking for some relief in taxation and a reduction in assessment. Finally, in January 1934 the taxes were reduced and based on \$75,000 and by November 1934 By-law No. 496 was passed to confirm the compromise.

April, 1934 was the month that C-I-L authorized the news releases across Canada announcing a new explosives plant at East Selkirk, Manitoba. The new plant was to be known as "Brainerd Works", and used for the manufacture of commercial high explosives. The plant was named after Dr. Thomas Brainerd, a pioneer of powder manufacturers in the Dominion. Also, one of his sons, Winthrop Brainerd, was Vice-President of C-I-L at the time.

The company admitted that plans for the construction

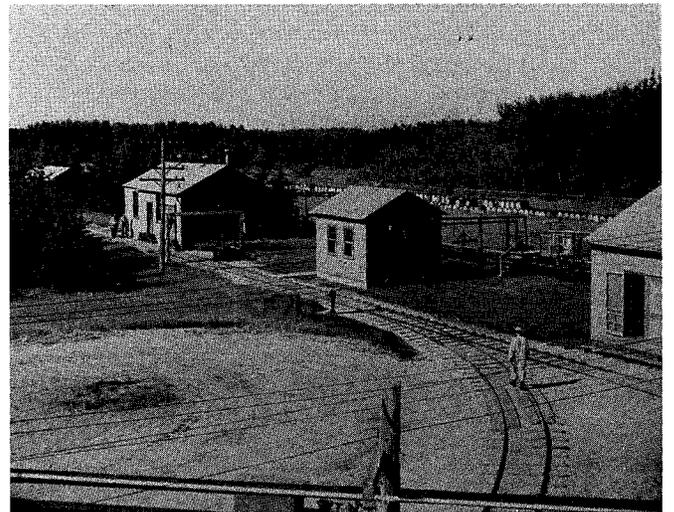


Case House.

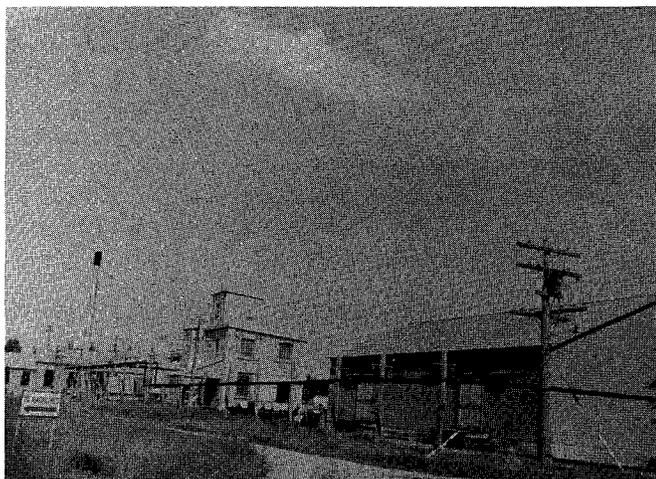
of this unit were made as early as 1929, but operations had been postponed owing to the depression. However, progress in the development of mining activities in the Middle West led the C-I-L board of directors to authorize construction. It was hoped that the manufacture of explosives at this strategic point would reduce haulage from the distance of about 1800 miles to between 600 and 700 miles. Mr. Arthur B. Davis, President and Managing Director of C-I-L also made public in 1934 that the explosives factory was expected to cost about \$250,000 and give employment to about 25 men, at the outset.

In an article carried in the "Contractor" in Nov.-Dec. 1934, it was pointed out that "Brainerd Works" was a development of unusual interest, not only from a structural standpoint, but also because it represented a concrete expression of faith in the immediate future of the west.

In describing the 1200 acre site in 1934 the visitors were particularly impressed with the extreme precautions built-in against danger from friction or static, and against fire



Mix house, change house, laundry and a section of the machine shop.



Machine shop, soda storage, dope house and raw material warehouse at Brainerd Works site.

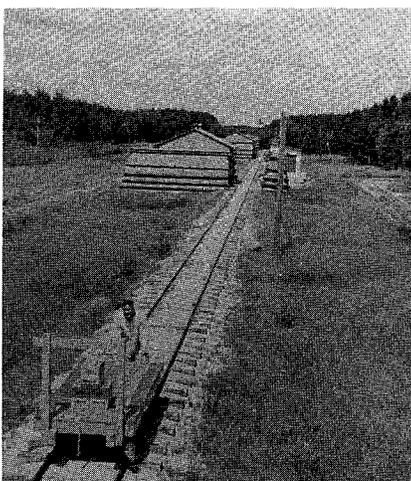
or electrical storms. All this called for the thorough grounding of the buildings, the use of brass and copper instead of iron and steel, even in such items as door hinges. Other safety precautions included the use of sections of hardwood for rails rather than steel on the narrow gauge track as well as safety windows, sand filled barricades and the location of motors, switches and other apparatus, all outside the buildings.

By December, 1934 the company had constructed 17 buildings in all. The group included an office, storehouse, a dope house (for the mixing of non-explosive ingredients) power house, shops, change house, a shell house, mixing house, cartridge house, a packing house and 5 magazines.

Regulations controlled the distance between the buildings, the quantities of ingredients allowed in each building, the number of employees in each building and the methods used in operation.

The plant, like other explosive factories, operated under a yearly license.

Most of the buildings with the exception of the office were constructed of galvanized iron, the latter being specially prepared and having a two-ounce zinc coating.



An order for explosives is drawn from the powder magazines in background at Brainerd Works Site.

All the pier foundations were placed down to the blue clay at a depth of about 7 feet. All sills and joists were creosoted B.C. fir. All buildings that held explosives were placed at least 300 feet apart and protected by sand-filled barricades. All buildings were thoroughly grounded, 147 ground rods eight feet in length being used. On the average there were 12 rods to a building.

The first of the buildings to which special attention might be drawn is the office. It was a one storey frame structure accommodating a storehouse, first aid room and three offices. Fibre board insulation was used in the interior as well as hardwood for the floor.

The next building was a store house of heavy frame construction, in which 6" x 6"'s were used. The exterior was galvanized iron. The entire floor was concrete, asphaltic strips being used in the expansion joints. Two sliding doors were provided for incoming materials from the standard gauge spur track, and on the opposite wall were two more doors opening directly to the narrow gauge track.

Next in line was a group of skids for the temporary storing of materials received in steel drums, and for their transfer from the standards to the narrow gauge railroad.

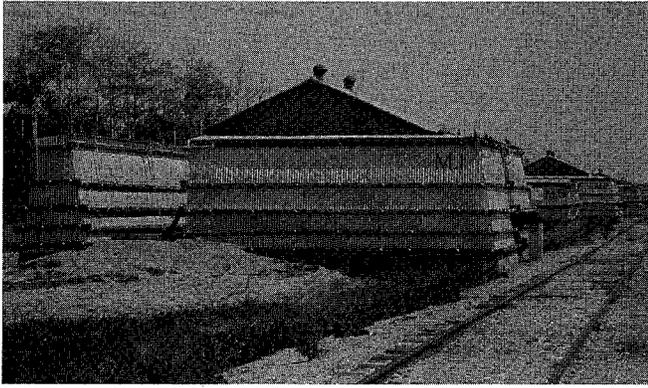
The soda store was one of the largest buildings of the group. In this building reinforced concrete was used for floors and battressed walls to a height of five feet. The roof was high pitched and built at the angle of repose of nitrate of soda. A screw conveyor, having a diameter of 16" delivered the sodium-nitrate from the hopper, into which the cars were unloaded, to a penthouse, from which it was in turn conveyed by another screw mounted on the ridge and which discharged it for the length of the building from 4 outlets. The motor operating the conveyors was located in the penthouse. Sodium-nitrate was delivered from storage to the dope house by a third screw conveyor.

In the dope house, the main bucket elevator delivered the main ingredients to a third floor. Located in the basement was the drive, the elevator boat, into which nitrate of soda from storage was delivered and also a condensate pump. The discharge from the bucket elevator was equipped with a magnetic separator. The equipment included a Toledo print weight scale, which registered exact amounts of ingredients added for accurate recording. The material, as each batch was weighed out, was put down through a screen equipped with an air vibrator and then transported to the mix house in fibre "Roving" cans with canvas covers. In no part of the dope house was woodwork exposed, the building being entirely concrete, steel and brick. The roof, made of lumber, was lined with sheet metal. A fire ladder was placed on the outside and the building contained a sprinkler system. The entrance was covered and it was hot water heated.

Next in line was the box storage building made of heavy frame and galvanized iron construction with a heavy No. 1 maple floor.

The power house had 2 hot water boilers and 1 steam boiler of 15 lb. rating. These were hand fired and equipped with forced draft. The steel stack was 70 feet high with a 24" diameter, and was well guyed.

The pump room had 2 motor driven centrifugal pumps



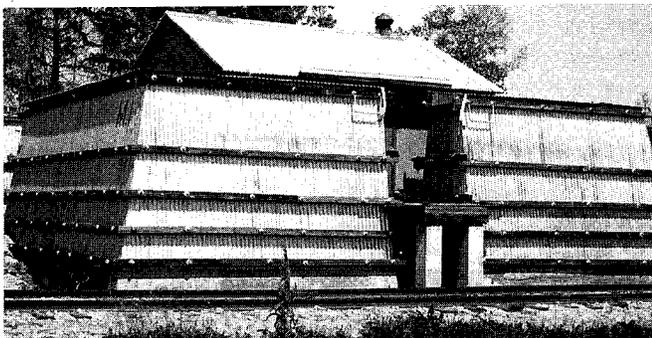
Explosive Storage bunkers.

for circulating hot water through the heating system and also one emergency gas driven pump for the same purpose. The water was supplied from a 300 foot well by a Pomona pump into a reservoir with a capacity of 53,820 gallons and was located west of the power house. From the reservoir, water was led into a suction pit in the pump room then driven throughout the plant by a motor driven centrifugal pump. In addition, there was a fire pump with a 500 gallon per minute capacity. Also located in the pump room was a switch board. Power was brought in from the Wpg. Elec. lines on the west bank of the Red River and was reduced from 2200V to 550V for the motors and 110 for the lighting system.

Adjoining the pump room was a general purpose repair shop and a change house. One room was equipped with steel lockers, tables and benches, while in the other room was sinks, toilets and showers. The floors in the boiler room and pump room were concrete while the repair shop floors were hardwood. The change house was cement over hardwood.

Two hot water pipes measuring 2300' served the power plant. Practically all joints were welded with as few pipe fittings as possible. The pipe lines were covered with 85% magnesia covering and then heavy roofing paper wound with copper wire.

All outside lines were suspended from poles set 12' apart. They were suspended by steel clamps attached to grabber iron held by wood or pipe cross arms. There were 2 sets of expansion joints. The steam line was insulated in the same way. Running a distance of about 1200' was the airline of 2" pipe on which were 2 receivers.



The shell house was a frame building with concrete floor, corrugated iron outside and flat galvanized iron inside. It had 2 rooms, one for storage of paper and the other equipped with machinery for the making and printing of shells as well as equipment for impregnating the shells with paraffin. A narrow gauge spur came right into the house, which permitted shells in wooden crates to be loaded. The building had a sprinkler system and was the main consumer of steam by reason of the handling of paraffin.

The change house included the powder line foreman's office, a store room for powder machine parts and a change room for the use of employees within the explosive area.

Men working in the explosive area were required to wear special clothing with no metal buckles or buttons, no cuffs on the pants. Pockets were such that allowed a hanky or notebook but no penknife or coins etc. The footwear worn inside could not be worn elsewhere. Visitors had to put on rubber footwear that had not been outside. This was a safeguard against grit or sand being tracked in that might cause friction. On the approach of a thunderstorm, all operations ceased and the men retired to a safe distance. As well, all buildings, motors, and the electrical equipment were thoroughly grounded with static removed from drive belts.

The first group of buildings in the explosive area were similar and placed 300' apart. There was the mixhouse, cartridge house and packing house. All three were frame construction, on concrete piers, corrugated iron outside, insulating wall board inside with hardwood floors. The cartridge house had a linoleum floor. All the buildings had safety windows for quick exit which resembled double french doors, opening from the inside and barely secured. Hinges were brass with brass pins and brass screws. The glass was double paned with one being ground glass to prevent direct sunlight from falling on the powder.

All the electric lights were enclosed and recessed in boxes covered with glass accessible only from outside the building. All conduits and switches were placed outside the buildings. No steel or iron was exposed at any point likely to come in contact with explosives and for that reason all metal was generally brass or copper. Motors were located in separate detached buildings, except in the case of the mix house where the driving motor was underground, enclosed in a concrete pit. This was used to drive the mixing machine, a large wooden bowl lined with rubber, in which operated two chaser wheels. On the narrow gauge track passing through the covered entrances and from a point 20' past the buildings, oak or maple were used rather than steel for the rails. The door jambs to a height of 4' were faced with rubber. Loose powder was conveyed in wooden boxes, provided with wooden wheels.

On 2 sides of each of these buildings were sand filled barricades holding from 75 to 80 tons of screened sand. In the construction of the barricades, a concrete curb was provided on all four sides. On this was raised a wooden frame work which served as temporary support for the corrugated iron and the creosoted "whaling" strips. The barricades were filled by hand.

Further down the line were four 25 ton dynamite magazines, and one steel magazine used for detonators. They were all of frame construction covered with galvanized iron. The floors were of B.C. fir and the interiors were sheathed with B.C. fir "V" joints. The roof was 7/8" tongued and grooved, covered with roofing paper and then covered with corrugated iron. The magazines were surrounded on all four sides by the barricades.

For protection against bush or grass fires in the explosives area, there were 9 hydrants each having a metal box containing a coiled 150 to 250' hose which was at all times connected to the hydrants.

A large quantity of gravel was used at Brainerd totalling 5,500 cu. yards, being used for aggregate, the narrow gauge tramway as well as for the barricades.

The company owned some 4,000' of standard railway as well as the 3600' of the narrow gauge wooden railway. All the ties were B.C. fir, creosoted. The ties for the narrow gauge being 6' x 6' and the 20 pound rail was used at a gauge of 30".

The whole Brainerd plant was designed by the Engineering Dept. of C-I-L and was constructed under the supervision of E.E. Bard of the Explosives Division. The special powder machinery was built at the C-I-L shops. The general contractor was Carter-Halls-Aldinger Co. Ltd. of Wpg., and no subcontracts were let.

The first high explosive manufactured at Brainerd was on Dec. 10, 1934 and consisted of one 1000 lb. mixing of 40% Polar Forcite Gelatin. On Dec. 19, 1934 one 1400 lb. mixing of 60% Polar Forcite Gelatin was processed. The interval between Dec. 10 to 19th, being occupied in the completion of necessary construction detail in the explosive buildings and in the training of the crew on dummy powder. Processing of 60% Polar Forcite Gelatin was attempted on Dec. 20th, but difficulty was encountered in the drive and clutch on the cartridging machine. These conditions were corrected and an actual start on operations was obtained on Dec. 21, 1934 when 5 mixings were processed for a total of 134 cases.

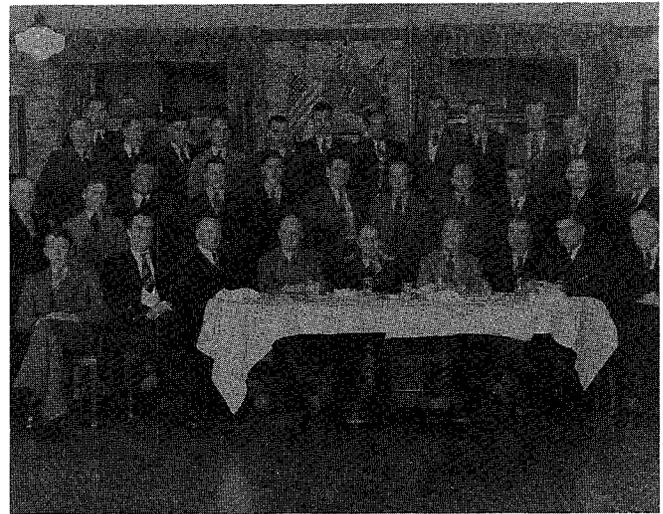
The first invoice dated Dec. 7, 1934 was for 4 cases of 60% Polar Forcite Gelatin with no size shown. This would be powder transferred from the old Oakbank magazine and not made at Brainerd.

Probably the first Brainerd shipment (powder) was one case of 60% Polar Forcite that went out on Dec. 26, 1934.

It was understood that the new Brainerd Works would supply high explosives to most of the territory west of the Great Lakes.

The first works Manager at Brainerd was Mr. C.S. Hannen who had transferred from Beloeil, Quebec. Mr. Hannen was a graduate in chemistry from McGill University and had 11 years with the C-I-L Explosives Division. The Asst. works Manager was Mr. W.D. Irwin, a graduate in Chemical engineering from Toronto University and had been with C-I-L since 1929. The Chief Clerk was Mr. J. Keddie, a man with 19 years service with C-I-L.

The three C-I-L plants at Beloeil, Nobel and James Island had looked after all explosives business in Canada until 1934 when the smaller explosives plant was erected



Brainerd Employees.

at East Selkirk. By January 1935, Brainerd was supplying explosives to extreme Western Ontario as well as Northern Manitoba Mines.

The East Selkirk plant was unique in that it had no acid and no nitroglycerine line. A high strength gelatinous explosive was manufactured at Nobel or Beloeil and was shipped to Brainerd where it was reworked, with added ingredients, to produce a lower strength explosives grades, 30-60%.

In January 1935 the company employed about 30 persons, practically all residents of the municipality of St. Clements, and their monthly payroll totalled about \$2,000. Much of their raw materials and finished products were being shipped by highway.

In the summer of 1935 the Works Manager at Brainerd informed Council that C-I-L planned to make shipments by water. To facilitate this C-I-L had a road constructed on River Lot No. 87 from Henderson Highway to the Red River. Along with this C-I-L had constructed dock facilities and purchased two barges.

In the fall of 1935, C-I-L management wrote to Council urging the municipality to keep Henderson



Highway open and clear of snow during the coming winter. Council was short of funds and hard pressed to find the revenue needed to meet this type of request. St. Clements met with the Hwy. Commissioner and attempted to get some financial assistance, but to no avail. In all fairness to St. Clements, it should be mentioned that the depression had deepened and the weight of unemployment and relief weighed heavily on the municipality. This was a time when local governments in Manitoba were driven to the brink of bankruptcy. Also the C-I-L financial statement showed lower profits, as did many other manufacturing concerns around the country.

The Brainerd site enjoyed over 11 years of accident free operation. This record was shattered by tragedy on Aug. 29, 1945, at 2:30 pm. when three men were instantly killed in an explosion in the gelatin cartridge house. The three men killed were: William Rokosh aged 34 years, Emil B. Malmstrom aged 35 years and John Drobot aged 28 years. Three men in the prime of life. No other workers were in the building at the time of the blast and no other workers on the site sustained any injuries. It was stated that the part of the galvanized steel building in which the explosion took place, plus the machinery housed there, were scattered for hundreds of yards by the blast. Arthur Macfie, who was in the C-I-L field south said it looked like a mushroom in the air and that 2 x 4's flew in the air and stuck like arrows upright in the ground. Arthur stated that the fence on the west side blew flat down by the force.

The explosion occurred when the three man crew had completed punching cartridges of 30% Forcrite. About 100 lbs. of Forcrite had still to be removed from the building when the explosion occurred. Plant officials at the time said it was fortunate that the majority of Forcrite had been removed previously. The three men had been clearing the machine prior to punching in a 40% powder.

Major McNaughton, Plant Manager, along with his Plant Foreman, Sam Rowley, had quite a fight with fires which had caught in the grass following the explosion and were being fanned by a north wind toward the cartridge storage house, some 100 yards away where a very large quantity of explosives was stored. Major McNaughton paid tribute to the men for their efficiency and coolness in helping avert further disaster, "every man knew his job and did it automatically without a hitch".

The total loss was estimated at about \$50,000 and production was interrupted for several days.

An inquest was opened Aug. 31, 1945 but the jury was unable to establish the cause of the explosion. Major McNaughton had testified that the blast could not have been caused by either the machinery or static electricity. The inquest was under the direction of W.H.G. Gibbs and was adjourned until Sept. 6, 1945 and finally concluded during an evening meeting at the Council chambers.

When interviewing Sam Rowley during 1982 with respect to the 1945 disaster, he said, "it was a puzzler as to what really happened and perhaps we will never know" ... "I was in the gelatin cartridge house less than two minutes before the blast and operations were normal at the time of the visit and I had just reached the packing

house when I heard the explosion." Sam went on to say that they were always careful about the safety end of the operation ... "you had to change your clothes on the job site right down to your safety boots. The company supplied and laundered the clothing, when you finished your shift you stripped and showered before putting your own clothing back on ... if you were caught ignoring the safety rules you would probably be fired on the spot. If you wanted a smoke you had to wait for your lunch break and went down to the end building (main office) for your cigarette ... you really had to know what you were doing in that place ... for instance you were not supposed to run, just move slowly from place to place, and be especially careful in some areas such as when you were shovelling where the shells were mixed and made," said Sam.

The CNR tracks came right into the C-I-L compound and, according to sources, the CNR used to throw off sparks that ruined many a hay crop along the route. Those sparks that were visible from the engines used to cause fires and caused C-I-L workers a lot of concern.

There were several women working at Brainerd at one time and their main duty was filling up shells, placing them in 50 lb. crates ready for shipping. Sam Rowley, who is now 82 years old, remembered "they were great workers and it was good for us boys having the women around, it made us watch our language and actions."

On Dec. 11, 1959, the Brainerd works celebrated its 25 years of operation. The anniversary was commemorated by a dinner for employees, retired personnel, their wives and guests. One of the highlights of the celebration was the presentation of watches as 25 year service awards to H.A. McNeill, Michael Nadwidny, Samuel Rowley, William Van Hartvelt and Arnolt Flett, who had all been employed in the plant since its inception. Among the invited guests, it is interesting to note, were: E. Schreyer, MLA, Mayor Massey of Selkirk and Reeve Max Dubas of St. Clements. At the time of the 1959 anniversary, the Brainerd Works had won 10 awards for their safety program, including the highest one, the "C-I-L Prize," for which it had qualified three times in succession.

Eleven years later a news release dated June 4, 1970 stated that:

"The Brainerd explosives plant of C-I-L in East Selkirk would cease high explosive manufacturing operations on Sept. 11, 1970." It went on to say that the plant would, "continue to be utilized as a magazine for storage and warehousing of explosives and blasting accessories and for the limited manufacture of some blasting agents" The reason given was that, "current requirements of the market made the changes necessary."

The C-I-L plant at East Selkirk had been manufacturing high explosives and blasting agents for the mining and construction industries for more than 35 years. C-I-L representatives indicated that the major trend in the mining industry by mid-1970 was to supply products from on-site plants located at the mine itself or adjacent to it. By 1970 two C-I-L on-site plants were brought into operation in Manitoba, at Thompson and Pipe Lake, and a third was located at Bruce Lake in Ontario, near the Manitoba border. These plants were able to provide the more rapid service required by customers and this is what

contributed to the major drop in production at the Brainerd plant.

Some 16 employees were affected by C-I-L's decision to curtail manufacturing at Brainerd. These employees were promised employment at other C-I-L locations. If they didn't wish to relocate, C-I-L stated the company would help in other ways such as seeking alternative positions, placement retraining or other assistance. C-I-L provided a relocation allowance to the Brainerd employees who moved to other C-I-L plants in Canada. Those who did not wish to move received a separation allowance.

The company promised special pensions for those longer service employees who were not placed within the company.

Soon, there were only three men left working at Brainerd, two full time employees (Gordon Swain and Ken Jenkinson) and one part time (Mike Fiwchuk).

By Sept. 1970 the manufacturing operations for nitro-glycerine based explosives had ceased at Brainerd. Therefore, the following buildings were taken out of service and were boarded and locked:

- S. 4. Dope House
- S. 6. Box Storage
- S. 11. P.L. changehouse, office and Laboratory
- S. 15. Spare Material Shed
- S. 17. Laundry
- S. 19. Shell House
- S. 30. Auxiliary Boiler House
- S. 32. Warehouse.

P1 Gelatin Mix House - plus Fan and Motor House.

P2 Gelatin Cartridge House - plus fan and motor house.

P3 Pack House and Dough Room.

At the end of Nov. 1970 the SI- Works office and Stores Building along with S.5, the soda and AM Store, were removed from service. However, the Magazines continued to be used for storage of explosives and building P.6 remained in operation for the manufacture of a blasting agent.

The property was reassessed based on this information and Business Roll No. 20 "Explosive Mfg. RL 89/104 was adjusted to reflect this change. Effective Oct. 1, 1970 the roll read a change from \$15,540 to \$8,040.

Then, only two men were left working until 1978 when Gordon Swain was laid off and Ken Jenkinson remained for another 6 months. Ken had worked for C-I-L for about 32 years and finally retired at age 55 in 1978. From 1978 to the present time this plant site has been operated from the Wpg. Office of C-I-L.

Prior to the wind down of operations C-I-L kept four watchmen on the site, 24 hours per day, for security as well as to keep the boilers going at about 15 lb. pressure. Under the Explosives Act and changes at Brainerd, this security was no longer required, according to officials who administer the Act.

Over the years the Brainerd crew befriended two dogs one nicknamed "Stupid" ... he was a St. Bernard, brown and white in colour and rather clumsy, hence the name. The other was a Black Labrador who, so the story goes, had been poisoned. The boys rushed him to the Vet, who saved the dog and it never left the site after its recovery.

The boys shared their lunches with the two pets. Blackie never barked but guarded the gates.

The Brainerd Works operated two tenant houses which were located within the Town of Selkirk on Eveline St. No. 282 and No. 243. The company also owned two barges, one of which was sold and the other ended up in the slough and was finally destroyed. When the plant was in full operation, they made use of a two-ton truck and 3/4 ton truck, both owned by C-I-L.

When the Cordite Plant in Transcona was built, some of the Brainerd personnel were seconded as advisors to assist in the initial building and organization.

During 1982 the company removed all buildings from the site with the exception of one warehouse and the magazines (bunkers). The old main office building was purchased and moved up to Victoria Beach for future use as a cottage. Some of the buildings had been removed earlier by tender.

The grounds were neutralized by setting off explosives at strategic areas within the property boundary ... this clears the area so that future use of land can be cycled with relative safety.

The Dept. of Energy, Mines and Resources (Explosives Division) at Ottawa have regularly inspected Brainerd and have reported generally excellent conditions on site, and on most occasions that "it is a pleasure to find an installation to inspect like Brainerd where one does not find it necessary to constantly draw to the attention of the escort, various deficiencies and irregularities."

The C-I-L representatives and the R.M. of St. Clements maintained a good working relationship over the years. The plant commenced operations at a time when employment for our residents was badly needed and continued to provide employment opportunities for some 36 years, up until Wpg. assumed full responsibility for Brainerd in 1970.

We decided to write a fairly comprehensive story about Brainerd (CIL) not only because it served a local need by way of employment for over one half century, but because of the role it played in the development of the mid-west. Also, it brought to Manitoba a new industry which, by its very nature, introduced features of building safety and accident prevention entirely novel to this Province at the time.

We hope the photographs of the 1934 site as well as the 1935 crew will stir old memories and we have included some 1982 scenes of the site for comparison.

In conclusion, C-I-L took decisive action in 1970 due to economic factors brought about by changes in the market, and did so reluctantly, with due consideration for the needs of the employees affected.

“THE BAIT HOUSE”

submitted by Mrs. Lillian Natchuk

Alexander Natchuk born October 14, 1927, loved the river. As a lad he would check the river before going to school. Alex and brother Joe caught fish, all week, for sale to the weekend crowds. They filled boxes with carp, bass, pickerel and catfish. There were some crude buyers and cheated on weight and prices. To get even, the fish were filled with stones. Finally they came to terms and didn't cheat anymore.



Lillian
Homenick
and Alex
Natchuk, 1957.

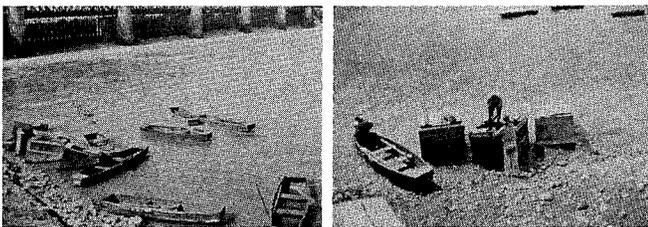


Andrew Hnatiuk



Alen Natchuk

All week minnows were caught with a half moon scoop, for the weekend crowd. The price was 25 cents a can with salt if desired. He would sleep in the empty



Row boats and minnow boxes at the locks owned by Alex Natchuk.

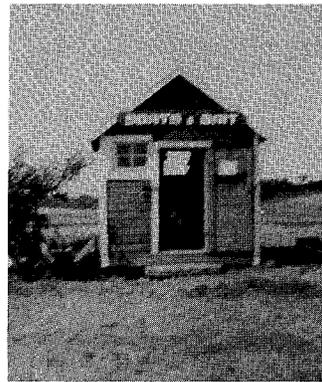
minnow boxes to be sure the first customers weren't missed.

In 1945 a small building was bought and located near the bridge on the east side of the Red River. Alex called it “The Bait House”. He and brother Nick built row boats and later bought a fleet. These were rented for \$1.00 per day.

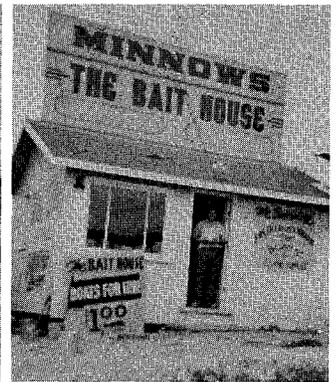
A taxi license was acquired in 1948, calling it “Alex's Taxi”. He and brother John transported employees to Fairfields Woollen Mills. Then in the early 50's they drove pupils from Henderson Highway North and Kirkness to Gonor School.



1945, First Bait House
by the Red River.



The first Bait House, 1947.



The second Bait House.



The third Bait House, 1964.



The fourth Bait House.

These years sturgeon were plentiful and worth catching for caviar. Alex would sell it to the fish companies.

As years went by, Alex developed an easier technique to capture bait. A wire cage type seine, hinged on the bow of the punt (boat) and lifted to funnel the minnows into the box. It was nicknamed “A Crazy House”. This Crazy House was Alex's own invention. Many of these were copied later.

Live bait was banned in 1950, and were frozen in packages. He decided to wholesale minnows. Each package was wrapped in newspaper, packed in boxes and delivered by car.

This same year (1950) the Red River Valley was