



Newsletter Fall 2022

Autumn is slowly turning into winter here in the NWT capital. We are experiencing a very strange summer and fall season in the north with very little precipitation and overall warm weather. There are even forest fires still burning in some parts of the NWT! Does this mean for a mild winter, or an unfathomably cold one?

MUSEUM CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Construction continues on the Yellowknife Historical Society museum project although delays in the availability of contractors has pushed back our anticipated completion date into next spring. In the meantime, we have been working on an exhibit plan as we start thinking about the types of stories or artifacts to share in the museum. We have ordered restaurant tables and chairs through **Quality Furniture** in Yellowknife, and they have offered a significant discount as a donation to our project. Thanks **Jeannie Rocher!**

FAREWELL TO TRACEY BRYANT

Society coordinator Tracey Bryant resigned her position this month after nine years administrating our affairs. We were sorry to see her go and wish her all the best in future endeavours. Book keeping services are now being contracted out and the coordinator's position will be dependent on our staffing needs as the Society enters a facility operations phase in the coming months.

GIANT MINE A-SHAFT POWERHOUSE DEMOLISHED

A sad farewell to the **Giant Mine A-shaft Powerhouse** building, slowly being dismantled board by board as part of the Giant Mine Remediation Project this month. This follows the demolition of the other A-shaft buildings - the headframe and hoist room, in 2016. Once part of our envisioned museum project grounds, we were unable to secure rights to take over these buildings and make them part of our property. There was considerable work needed to bring them up to repair and we had to focus attention and money on our main museum building.



A-shaft powerhouse demolition

However, one of the massive diesel engines from the powerhouse will be removed for future display and we also salvaged parts of the old hoist years ago.

GEOSCIENCE FORUM

The Society will have a booth promoting the museum project at the **Geoscience Forum** being held, for the first time in 3 years, in person on [November 15-17](#). If you are interested in volunteering at our booth, please respond to this email. This is also the 50th anniversary celebration of the Geoscience Forum, so congratulations to the NWT Chamber of Mines for achieving such a historic milestone!

RANNEY HILL TRAIL

The **Ranney Hill hiking trail** will have a grand opening event on October 27 at 10:30 am. The popular hiking route has received some nice upgrades thanks to the financial support of Gold Terra Corporation. Trail features include several signs promoting the area, including biographies of Mr Winslow Ranney himself - the prospector whose name adorns the hill - together with other characters notable in the region's prospecting/geology history: Neil Campbell, Sam Otto, and Michel Sangris.

A biography of Winslow Ranney:

Yellowknife's beloved geologic landmark, Ranney Hill, is named for a prospector that staked claims in this area in the 1930s. Winslow Clayton Ranney was born in 1886 in the United States and came to the Northwest Territories in 1917. He became a naturalized Canadian citizen in 1926 while living in Fort Norman. Many prospectors got a start by living off the land as fur trappers. In 1928, Ranney applied to open a trading post on the Slave River near Fort Smith. This was a time when independent traders and trappers increased their business in the Great Slave Lake district.

In 1935, at the start of the gold prospecting rush around Yellowknife Bay, Winslow Ranney began staking mineral claims around the hill now bearing his name. The claim names were as colourful as the gold he found in the quartz: 'Crater', 'Rainbow', and 'Milky Way'. By 1939, many small pits had been blasted in search of gold and Ranney built log cabin camps at Martin Lake and Rater Lake. He started an underground tunnel into a rich quartz vein and purchased a hand-operated crusher to recover a bit of gold.

The seasonal life of many prospectors was to search for gold in the summer and head south for the winter. During World War II, as mining activity went quiet, Winslow Ranney trapped at Trout Rock (Enodah) and Rocher River, and worked on railroads in the United States. He returned to Yellowknife after the war and worked at Giant Mine from 1952 to 1956 operating the big steam boilers that supplied the mine's heat. In this retirement, Ranney lived at Fort Fitzgerald on the Slave River. Ranney Hill stands in memory of the venerable gold prospector who didn't always strike it rich but was always on the hunt.

GIANT MINE PODCAST

On Sept. 14, CBC released '**GIANT - MURDER UNDERGROUND**', a 7-episode podcast series hosted by Rachel Zelniker. 'Giant' revisits the 1992 Labour Dispute at the Giant Gold Mine in Yellowknife that pitted its union against the mine's new president. On September 18, 1992, nine workers crossed the Giant picket line. Minutes later all were killed in a horrific explosion. The fallout was a city divided, and one of the most labour-intensive murder investigations the RCMP has ever seen.

Thirty years later, 'Giant' tells this complex story through the voices of those who lived it, from top police investigators and critical union members to anguished victims, and murder suspects-many of whom have never spoken publicly before.

All seven episodes of 'GIANT - MURDER UNDERGROUND' are available now on CBC Listen and everywhere podcasts are available. Listen for free on CBC Listen at [cbc.ca/Giant](https://www.cbc.ca/Giant)

YELLOWKNIFE IN THE EARLY DAYS

Michael Ward sent us copies of photographs from his father's collection. **John Ward** was a mining engineer who came north in the late 1930s to work at Negus Mine. He later served on the board of directors for Rayrock Mines and Tundra Mines. Thanks Michael for sharing some of your family albums!



First bank in Yellowknife



Yellowknife Supplies & Drug Store



Negus Mine buddies



Underground at Negus

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ranney Hill Trail grand opening – October 27, 2022 @ 10:30 am
Geoscience Forum Tradeshow – November 15-17, 2022 at Multiplex. The Society will have a booth.



ABOUT THE MUSEUM PROJECT

The Yellowknife Historical Society envisions the museum site at Giant Mine as a place that celebrates all aspects of Yellowknife's interesting history, from its Indigenous stories, geological setting, prospecting, the industrial activities of the gold mines, and the pioneer entrepreneurs that laid the foundation for the town in the 1930s. The museum will diversify current tourism-related opportunities and is expected to appeal to visitors as well as residents of Yellowknife.

Yellowknife Historical Society

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NEWS CLIPPINGS

Yellowknife's newest museum targets April 2023 opening

Cabin Radio August 16, 2022

A museum dedicated to the history of Yellowknife is set to open next year following a \$1.2-million cash injection from the federal government

The Yellowknife Historical Society says it will use the money to improve the former recreation hall at Giant Mine, previously donated to the society, which will be the new museum's main exhibition hall.

The society says much of the work is already under way as a project first envisaged more than 20 years ago moves toward completion. "This funding was so, so welcome and needed, and it is going mainly to construction," Marie Adams, secretary-treasurer of the Yellowknife Historical Society, told Cabin Radio. "The building was just a shell ... Everything inside the building had to be done, with a couple of things outside."

She said the museum and interpretive centre will have a deck, an accessible ramp, a gift shop featuring local artisans and artists, and a café.

“This project is a culmination of over 20 years of volunteer effort on the part of Yellowknife Historical Society members, in particular Walt Humphries, past president, who first envisioned a community-based museum on this site,” said the society’s president, Helmut Epp, in a press release. “The Yellowknife Historical Museum will serve to illuminate the rich history of the area and we look forward to sharing these stories with residents and visitors alike.”

The society estimates more than \$700,000 has been spent on the building to date.

Yellowknife already hosts the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, a museum dedicated to the Northwest Territories and the broader history of northern Canada.

Adams says the new museum will focus on the Yellowknife region’s history in a way a museum with responsibility for a larger area cannot. “Just like Hay River has a museum, and Norman Wells has a museum showing off and showcasing the history and the culture and the geology of the area, we will be doing the same,” she said. “We will showcase the history, the culture, and the geology of the Yellowknife region.”

Outdoor exhibits already exist at the new museum and interpretive centre, and the society hopes to create a space the community can use outside museum hours. “We hope to provide a diversified tourist economy and a wonderful place for schools, children, the general public and visitors to have an experience and learn about the heritage of the region,” she said.

The museum will be located at the former Giant Mine site, which is undergoing a lengthy remediation project to help manage and monitor the after-effects of decades of gold mining, including the containment of more than 200,000 tons of toxic arsenic.

In 2019, Natalie Plato, the deputy director of the Giant Mine remediation project, [told the CBC](#) remediation would not affect the society’s project and cleanup staff would “work around the museum.” In the same report, the society said there was no arsenic contamination concern at the building set to house the museum.

Adams said the museum is on track to open by April 1, 2023, a deadline provided by the GNWT, which has also funded the project. She said the society is “working very, very hard” to have the museum ready by that time.