

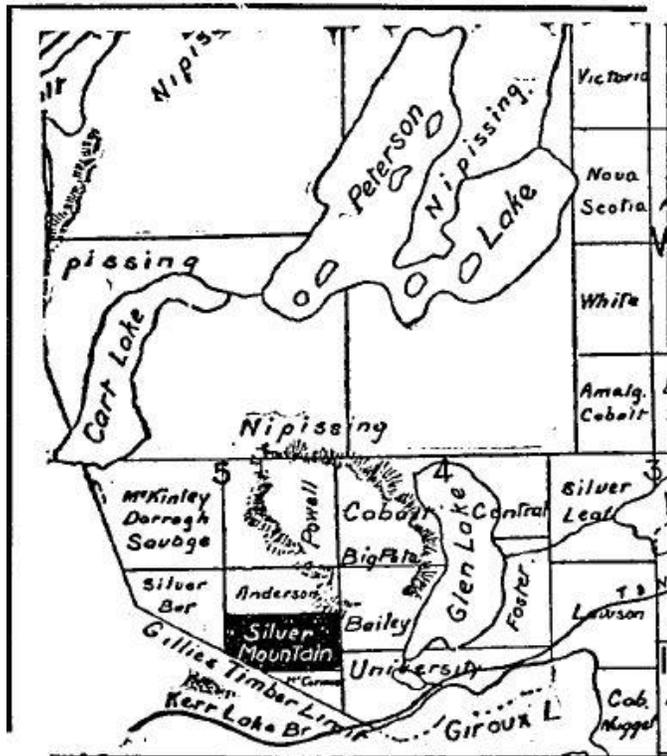
**Just Passing Through**  
**Arthur Gordon Penman**  
**Number 8 in a Series**  
**Local History by Allan Stacey ©**

The nascent *Canadian Mining Review*, in one of its earliest issues, August 1883, had a short editorial titled “*An Attempt to Swindle*,” concerning an attempt by two brothers to salt their farm with phosphate ore. They had transported several hundred pounds of rock to their property in the Gatineau Valley in “a clumsy attempt to *salt* a property.”

The *Canadian Mining Review*, and its subsequent iterations, made ferreting out fraudulent mining ventures a major *raison d’être*. So, how did Arthur Gordon Penman, the subject of this monograph, become a target of the mining journal?

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1907, *The Cobalt Silver Mountain Mining Company, Limited* was incorporated with a capitalization of \$1 million and a head office located in Ottawa, Ontario. Edward Guss Porter, (1859-1929), M.P. for West Hastings, was chosen as president and Arthur Gordon Penman (1883-1966) was managing director. Amongst the other directors were listed Colonel Adam Tozeland Shillington (1870-1946), a long-practicing doctor of Ottawa; Herbert Sylvester Clements, (1865-1939) M.P. for Kent, farmer, real estate agent and broker; and Clifton A. Douglas, (1853-1916) of *Clifton A. Douglas & Company*, financial brokers as well as handling insurance and real estate. The job of secretary-treasurer fell to Alexander Henry Fitzsimmons, (1877-1960) accountant for *C.A. Douglas & Company*.

An option had already been taken by Penman on a small parcel on the south half of the southeast quarter of the north half of lot 5, concession IV of Coleman Township prior to the organization of the company, later paying \$50,000 for the property. The seller was Rinaldo McConnell, the discoverer and developer of major nickel-copper mining properties in the Sudbury area prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Map showing location of the Silver Mountain Mine beside the University Mine.

Here are two interesting connections. In the 1901 Canadian census for the city of Ottawa, Clifton A. Douglas, one of the incorporators of record in the *Cobalt Silver Mountain Mining Company* is listed just seven households below Rinaldo McConnell, in the 1907 Ottawa street directory as dealer and operator of mining properties; president of *McConnell & Prospectors Exploration Company* and director of *The McConnell Silver Mining Company of Cobalt*. The property directly to the west of the Silver Mountain property was owned by the *Silver Bar Mining Company, Limited*, of which McConnell was president.

So, where does Penman enter this picture? Arthur Gordon Penman was born in the Province of Quebec in 1863, son of a clergyman and in 1891 the family was residing in Binbrook, near Hamilton, Ontario. At the time of the Silver Mountain flotation, Penman was managing director of *Penman & Strang, Limited*, a company said to be manufacturers of the Duplegraph. Very little is known of the Duplegraph, but *Penman & Strang, Limited* is listed in the 1907 Toronto street directory under duplicators and the Federal Government listed “purple duplegraph (sic) carbon paper” in its supplies. Whatever the duplegraph was, it couldn’t have been very successful as Penman and George E. Strang are only listed in the Toronto street directory for the years 1906 and 1907.

One of the missing pieces of the puzzle is how Penman enticed two, and possibly several more, Members of Parliament to join the Silver Mountain company.

The next actor to enter the stage was Edwin Croucher Kingswell, a New Zealander who fancied himself a mining engineer, although other sources described him as an assayer. Kingswell was born on the island of Tasmania, Australia, and moved to New Zealand where he first showed up with a partner as tea merchants in Greymouth on the South Island. The partnership failed and Kingswell had a moment of personal distress when he was arrested for not appearing in bankruptcy court. He went on to several other endeavors in the New Zealand mining field, including teaching at a mining school, dredging for placer gold and installing a cyanide plant to recover gold from tailings. In 1899, Kingswell left New Zealand, traveling to San Francisco before passing on to British Columbia where he was involved in a number of mining ventures.

In early March of 1907 an extensive advertisement for the *Cobalt Silver Mountain Mining Company* appeared in newspapers. An engineer’s report over the signature of E.C. Kingswell provided a glowing report on the company’s property. There are two inalienable rights of mine promoters; first, prospects near a producing mine guarantee success and secondly, veins always widen and become richer with depth. Kingswell noted that the Silver Mountain property was within one lot of the Foster, Big Pete and McKinley-Darragh-Savage mines and within two lots of the Nipissing. It was also interesting to note that the foreman of Rinaldo McConnell’s Silver Bar property, adjoining to the west, had discovered a vein that appeared to run directly onto the

Silver Mountain property. Kingswell also noted that he had so far discovered thirty-eight veins and provided “careful assays” which always contained silver. Without knowing the methodology of Kingswell’s sampling methods, the assays mean little.

By October of 1907 the situation at the Silver Mountain property had taken a disappointing turn. The *Canadian Mining Journal* seized upon an opportunity to tilt at its proverbial windmill. Upon taking possession of the property it was found that only approximately eleven acres of the potential twenty acres could be patented. A significant portion of the property was truncated by the boundary of the Gillies Timber Limit, which had been off limits to prospectors and miners until the spring of 1906. The Silver Mountain company sued Rinaldo McConnell for a portion of the purchase price, draining its own coffers in the futile exercise. Having relied largely on the sale of shares in an era when literally hundreds of companies were being chartered and competing for the public’s purse, the company went broke. The company had no option but to lease the property to Jacob A. Jacobs, owner of the successful nearby Kerr Lake (Jacobs) mine.

Two final notes on the Silver Mountain property. Firstly, Jacobs located thirty promising veins, but no high grade, although it is probable that he was responsible for the only shaft sunk on the property. Secondly, Penman brought suit against broker Clifton Douglas for shares that Douglas had held for Penman and wouldn’t relinquish.

By late October of 1907, Penman had moved on to his next project as representative of the *Canadian Smelting and Refining Company*. The plan was to build a “mammoth smelting works” at an undisclosed location in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. This smelter was to be designed to process ore from cobalt, as well as ore from the various copper mines in the area, which had been having a reincarnation of sorts. This was during an early period of the Cobalt mining camp in which usurious fees by American smelters combined with the transportation costs for the increasingly lower grades of ore being mined caused smelter and refinery proposals to pop up like spring dandelions.

As usual, the *Canadian Mining Journal* had an opinion, noting; “It would be well for Mr. Penman to devote his energies to pulling his Cobalt scheme out of the bog, before indulging in any more appeals to the public.”

Mining and smelting projects not having been successful for Penman, he went on to indulge in real estate. In 1913, along with a Toronto and a Buffalo, New York partner, two companies were formed, *The Buffalo General Realty Company* and the *Buffalo Suburban Estates*, both with a capitalization of \$50,000. The Buffalo newspapers chronicled the real estate sales on a regular basis for several years.

In the 1920’s Penman moved to Florida, again indulging in real estate and becoming an American citizen. An elegant brass plaque at his gravesite notes that he was the

first developer of the Beaches (Jacksonville Beach, Florida), purchasing large tracts of land and developing “countless subdivisions,” among them Pine Grove, Oak Ridge Park and Neptune Forest. The plaque notes; “A caring and responsible Civic Leader and conservationist, Arthur devoted a lifetime of faithful service to the Beaches Communities he built and loved, ever having their welfare and progress at heart.”

A long way from the rough and tumble world of Coleman township!



*Arthur Penman, a pioneer real estate developer of Jacksonville's beaches, stands beside a man-sized tarpon he caught in Jacksonville. Penman once held the record for the largest tarpon ever caught in the St. Johns River, a 7-foot-9-inch, 172 pound fish that he landed in Mill Cove. Image courtesy of the Beaches Museum & History Park.*