

LIMESTONE PROVIDED ONE OF CITY'S EARLY INDUSTRIES

REPORT SUPPLY STILL SUFFICIENT FOR 75 YEARS

The lime cliffs on the south shore of Little Traverse Bay were commercially attractive to early visitors to the area and provided business enterprises which have been in continuous operation from 1874 to the present – and will probably continue for another 75 years.

H. O. Rose, leader in business and civic activities of Petoskey from the time of his arrival in 1873 until his death in 1911, was the first to take advantage of the commercial possibilities of the lime rock.

He blasted enough rocks from the cliffs to form a platform for a kiln and started making lime in 1874. The kiln was located over the cliff at the foot of Howard Street. Later larger kilns were built a half mile to the northeast.

E. R. Sly came to Petoskey in 1884 and a year later brought his young son, Homer, now vice-president of the Petoskey Portland Cement Company. Mr. Sly started operations at Bay Shore, first as the Petoskey Lime Company and later as the Bay Shore Lime Co.

About 1905 the Elf Rapids Portland Cement Company was acquired and the two properties were operated as the Elk Cement and Lime Company with Homer Sly in charge of the Elk Rapids branch of the business.

In the meantime, the Zipp Brothers, Fred, Homer, George and Arthur, were associated in a lime kiln west of Bay Shore at what was known as Superior.

About 1905 the Northern Lime Company was organized as a sales company to handle the output of the Rose, Sly and Zipp organizations. In 1912 Morgan Curtis, who had been associated with the company, took over the properties and they were operated by the Northern Lime Company. Operations were stopped in the last decade when the market for lime dwindled with the rise in popularity of cement.

In 1912 Homer Sly set up the Petoskey Crushed Stone Company at the location of the present plant of the Petoskey Portland Cement Company.

In 1917 the Petoskey Portland Cement Company was organized with V. B. Kline as president; Mr. Sly, vice-president; and John I. A. Galster, secretary-treasurer. In January 1920, J. B. John and J. C. Buckbee were added to the board.

In 1919 construction was started on a stone-crushing plant and dock. A two-kiln cement plant, with a capacity of 2,500 barrels a day, was begun in 1920. Operations were started with the first barrel of cement coming out on March 23, 1921.

In 1924 new construction was started to double the capacity of the plant by adding two kilns and the necessary additional buildings and equipment. At the present time the plant is turning out more than 1,600,000 barrels of cement a year.

It is estimated that the plant's quarries hold sufficient stone to keep operations going for at least another 75 years.

Originally the limestone was manufactured into lime for use in mortar. According to Mr. Sly, the stone at Petoskey and at Bay Shore was superior for that purpose. But as cement replaced lime, the

emphasis switched to the manufacture of cement. Stone at the location of the present plant is better suited for cement manufacture than that found at Petoskey and Bay Shore, Mr. Sly said.

The cement company now employs about 325 persons,