

Salt Spring Island can boast of many hobbies, touching on the weird, odd or beautiful, depending on the ability or whim of the hobbyist. Hobbies consist of stamps, ceramics, gun collections or driftwood, and various other fancies that bring pleasure to participants in these islands, as well as weaving, knitting and spinning wool. But of all these, none can compare to the hobby belonging to Fred Hollings of Fulford Harbor.



FIFTEEN-TON rhodonite rock gleams with color.

HOBBY

in the

PINK

by BEA HAMILTON

Fred's hobby comes by the ton, is rose pink in color, goes out to all parts of the world in constant pink stream and is beloved by all rockhounds.

It is a rhodonite mine and is definitely in the pink as a hobby!

Picked up by people from far and near, the rhodonite travels to far places in pockets, handbags or by car; anything from ounce slivers to 300 pounds in weight, this lovely pink rock varies in degrees of rose color.

Within 12 months, Fred sees about 1,000 people, and still they come. Mr. Hollings is currently working on a 15-ton rock which blocks the entrance to the mine.

A branch roadway, roughly bulldozed out by the owner, takes the visitor around bends and over steep hills, to the rhodonite mine; tall trees and a tangle of bush line the roadsides, and the mine lies, at a guess, 1,000 feet above sea level.

This is a surface mine, easily accessible, as far as getting out the rhodonite is concerned. All Fred has to do is to drive his powerful truck up a steep hill, on top of which lies his mine. A flat area just gives enough room to back the truck to the edge of a deep drop, a quick turn and Fred can then back his truck close to the entrance of the mine. Here he loads the great slabs of rose pink rock, streaked with blue, grey, black, green, yellow, onto the truck and he's ready to go.

The mine is at the road's end. All around are steep drops, and one looks down on the tops of timber—Douglas firs, Cedar and other trees. Far beyond that, the sea.

Back of the mine, are the high peaks of Mt. Tuam, and further west, Mt. Bruce.

The rhodonite mine is a small one, about 25 feet long and maybe 10 or 12 feet in depth. But the pink rock seems never ending, and could, says Fred, extend further along the mountain side. At present, he is too busy getting out his precious pink rock to look any further.

With his rock hammer in hand and his big smile of pure enjoyment, Fred looks like a happy elf, slightly overweight perhaps. It appears as if Fred has, not only rocks in his most profitable hobby, but in his head as well, for he can talk for hours on the subject.

He knows a lot about rocks and is most interesting, and his great delights are the freedom of the woods where he works and meeting so many people who come to see his rhodonite in its natural state.

"No man," says Fred, beaming, "could have a nicer hobby!"

When one figures he gets anything from 25c a pound and up, one is inclined to agree!

Prices depend on the quality and size. The huge rock which Fred was working on when accompanying pictures were taken, was a beautiful blue-grey color, with streaks of pure pink and deeper rose showing. Shades of green and mauve, with blacks and browns, made the rock a thing of beauty.

Fred warns that the rhodonite has to be handled with care. "We never use dynamite, but look for the natural veins, which run diagonally down the rocks," he says.

He showed how he bores holes, using a compressor drill and hydraulic jack hammer.

"In fact, I use everything," says Fred, "and

school work, Lawrence gives his father a hand. They have a small hut nearby where office work is done, or else the boys use it for a week-end camp.

It is an outdoor life and the family all take an interest in the woods. Even Mrs. Hollings takes time out to go picking Salal for florists.

So one might say there are two hobbies in one family for the Hollings, and they both work in well together.

While the men work on the mine, Mrs. Hollings picks her greens, then the same truck can pick up the rhodonite and the salal.

"I like the change away from housework, and besides, a little pocket money is a help," she says.

They find peace in the woods and enjoy the freedom from the rush and hurry of everyday living.

The sweet spicy scents of the pine trees and wild twin-flower, or trailing arbutus, the sudden flowering of the pure white wake-robin, or Trillium, the singing of the wild birds and the drumming of the grouse at mating time . . . all go with these two hobbies, and what is quite acceptable after the end of a day, the prospect of a little ready cash coming in!

Fred Hollings never misses a day in the mountain and wouldn't exchange his rosy pink dream hobby for any other in the world.

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Perhaps I should mention that when certain rocks are split open, and not necessarily rhodonite, they now and then, will show a picture formation, resembling ferns and trees; depending on the way the natural veins run. Nature has some wonderful surprises for those who seek for the unusual.

ROCKHOUNDS' DELIGHT BY THE TON

after the holes are bored along the vein I hammer gently in some iron pegs. Tapping these, the rock splits clean, and sometimes inside the rocks, are some beautiful pictures of ferns and other things."

He never knows whether the rock will show all deep pink or streaked. Some slabs have come away, pure rose color, and these are prized highly for lapidary jewelry.

Vancouver and Victoria stores have exquisite sets of earrings and bracelet, etc., made from rhodonite, and a little Sidney rock store shows some beautiful work in this line.

The true Salt Spring rhodonite is the deep pink, though all colors are found.

Rhodonite is a Greek word for rose, hence the name given to this rock. The deep, gleaming pink rock was used in past Russian art, for inlay work in palaces.

This went out of fashion after the Russian revolution.

Fred Hollings is a timber man. He worked on Vancouver Island for years before he came to Salt Spring Island in 1951.

He almost failed to buy the property on which the rhodonite mine stands, and because he likes to think of future generations of forest trees, he decided it would be a good idea to buy and re-plant fir trees. Much had been logged over and he couldn't see any valuable timber for current use, but like most timber men, looked into the future and saw promise of markets in years to come.

He was pleasantly surprised to find the rhodonite mine after he had purchased the property. Ever since 1960 he and his son Lawrence, have been working on the rock mine, but mostly Fred does the work as his son is studying. In between

THERMOPYLAE CLUB FOR FELLOWSHIP SPINNING YARNS

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to fill the many large cracks that storm, time and neglect had put in the canoe's hull, the Finnish-born ex-sealer worked there beside the Crystal Garden. By October, she looked once more a craft that could conceivably have crossed great oceans.

Since this transformation, with the years, public awareness and appreciation of Voss' canoe has grown. Provincial museum authorities too have aided much in her preservation and care, with the Thermopylae Club continuing to add other refinements to the restoration—tributes both to Capt. Voss and their first Skipper, the vigorous Capt. McDonald.

Without these two men there would be today no beautiful slim canoe to rest in the care of those other lovers of the sea and the ships thereon, the Maritime Museum of B.C.

THIS WEEK'S ANAGRAM

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|----------|------|------|--------|-----|
| (1) EARN | PLUS | DRUG | EQUALS | ??? |
| (2) TINE | " | SCAR | " | " |
| (3) RENT | " | VAIL | " | " |
| (4) RENT | " | MALE | " | " |
| (5) RENT | " | SLAG | " | " |

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