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Richest Vermiculite Deposit In World Being Mined In Green Springs District of County

"Corduroy"
Purcell Farm

by Helen Waltman

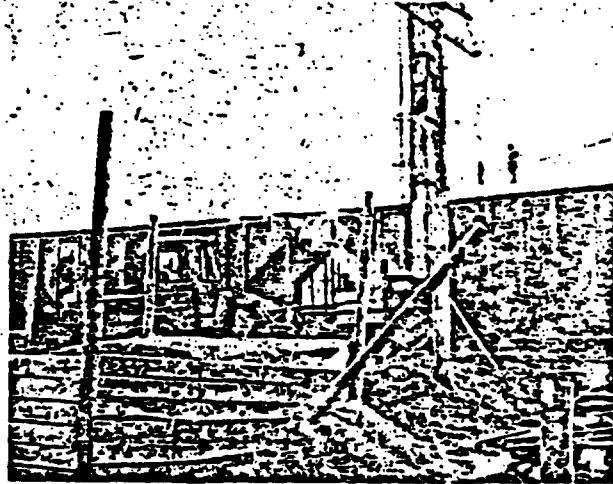
The vermiculite mine on the Francis and Fredericks Purcell property, "Corduroy", in the Green Springs District, is the richest deposit of vermiculite in the world. No other deposit in the world has fifty percent vermiculite, according to Robert Sanson, of the Richard E. Sanson Mine and Mill, a part of Virginia Vermiculite. Most mines run twenty-five to forty percent.

The company began mining in November at a rate of one-fourth percent capacity. It was January before it reached sixty percent capacity and is not expected to run full capacity until this summer. Recently, the mill began working on a 24-hour per day basis with the mill closed one shift on Monday for repairs.

The surface mine on the

Purcell property will be mined to a depth of fifty to sixty feet, although it is possible to reach a depth of ninety-five feet.

The mine operation is a closed circuit operation. Continued on Page 2



Vermiculite is dumped on this pile in foreground, to be loaded into boxcars to be shipped to Pittsburgh, Chicago and Arkansas. Ray Gordon, equipment operator, is standing on top of boxcar inspecting the loading procedure. One boxcar per day is filled with vermiculite, from the richest vermiculite mine in the world located on the property of Francis and Fredericks Purcell in the Green Springs District of Louisa County.

Vermiculite —

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There is no waste water and nothing is thrown away.

There is a market for all vermiculite they can mine and shipments are being made to Pittsburg, Chicago and Arkansas. Late April shipments will also be made to Wisconsin, Florida, and New Jersey as well as other points.

Of the numerous rules imposed by the Federal Government on mines, the local vermiculite mine was cited for only fourteen violations in a recent Federal inspection, and according to Lewis J. Hash, president, corrections have been made in all violations.

Vermiculite is hauled to the Town of Louisa in sixteen-ton trucks, and is put into box cars on the C&O Railroad siding for shipment. Only one truck is operating from the mill to the railroad cars. The vermiculite is washed and separated in the wet mill and dried in the dry mill before it is shipped, but is not expanded until after shipment. The expanded particles have interesting and important characteristics. They have excellent thermal insulating value, are highly resistant to fire, are light in weight and capable of holding large amounts of water.

Since its original com-

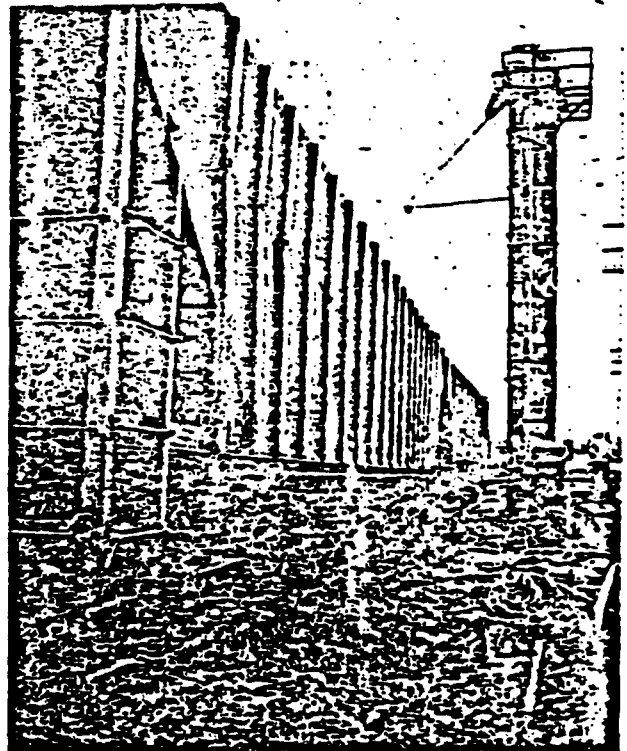
mercial development in the 1920's, the list of products made from vermiculite has greatly expanded. The principal uses of vermiculite in the construction industry include concrete aggregate for roof decks, fireproofing, attic insulation, masonry block insulation, and fire-resistant gypsum wallboard. The major uses of the mineral in agriculture are as horticultural vermiculite, as an ingredient for potting soils and plant growing media, and as a carrier for agricultural chemicals.

At the local plant Ned Gumble is mill superintendent, and Bill Schwind is office and lab manager. Foremen are Henry Smith, Frank Brooks and Bob Rackley.

Other employees are: Ricky Seay, Bernard Turner, Jimmy Farrar, Ernest Thacker, James Brooking, Mike Long, Bob Kuhfahl, Hal Dickens, Jim Sowash, Ray Gordon, Forest Johnson, David Pinter, Doug Chisholm and Tommy Arrington.

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Richest Deposit



Ray Gordon, an equipment operator for Virginia Vermiculite LTD., stands beside one of the boxcars which is being loaded with vermiculite on the C&O siding in the Town of Louisa for shipment. One sixteen-ton truck hauls daily to the loading point.