Laval University

From the Selected Works of Fathi Habashi

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Mining and Metallurgical Heritage

Fathi Habashi

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Mining and Metallurgical Heritage

Dr. Fathi Habashi, professor emeritus at the Department of Mining, Metallurgical, and Materials Engineering of the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering at Laval University in Quebec City has created recently a research unit entitled “Mining and Metallurgical Heritage” whose purpose is to collect and disseminate information about the history of mining and metallurgy and to emphasize the importance of heritage awareness.

Canada is a major producer of minerals and metals, ranking first in the world in uranium concentrate production, second in Nb, Ta, and asbestos, and third in sulfur. In refined metal production, Canada ranks first for Zn, second for Ni, third for Al, Au and Pt, fourth for Cu and Mg, fifth for Au, and sixth for Pb. The value of annual mineral production today is more than $40 billion.

The first exploitation of Canadian mineral wealth dates back to the creation of the Forges Saint-Maurice, located at Trois-Rivières during the regime of Nouvelle France, over 250 years ago. The location of the Forges is well documented and has been restored as a national heritage park. It was recognized by ASM International and the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy, and Petroleum (CIM) as a Canadian Industrial Heritage Landmark. With the exception of this monument, there is no organization in Canada that collects information about Canadian heritage in mining and metallurgy. The Metallurgical Society of the CIM has created in 1978 a Historical Metallurgy Committee to publish regularly papers devoted to the history of metallurgy. Dr. Habashi has been acting as chairman of this Committee since 1990.

Université Laval has a long history as a teaching and a research institution. It is located in the historic City of Quebec where the Musée de la civilisation hosts one of the world’s most important historic libraries, the Seminary Collection. The Department of Mining, Metallurgical, and Materials Engineering has a long-dated relations with this Library. Dr. Habashi has been a member of the Evaluation Committee of the Library. He also prepared and published an inventory of its holdings in mining, metallurgy, and related disciplines in 1975. He has been involved for many years writing and editing works about the history of mining and metallurgy.

Presently, most of the Canadian mining and metallurgy heritage is found in various and isolated areas. For example, the Mineral Museum in Thetford-Mines created an exhibition on the History of Magnesium because of the installation of the Mg-industry in the region is based on the local asbestos tailings. Dr. Habashi acted as a volunteer consultant to the Museum. The Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association holds meetings every two years in Kingston, Ontario; but the activity related to the history of mining and metallurgy is negligible. Dr. Habashi organized a Round Table at the 1997 Conference to discuss the preservation of the Canadian heritage. The views expressed by the panelists and the participants were positive, but tend toward a general conclusion that no funds are available to enforce anything in this direction. Conferences entitled “Cultural Heritage in Geology, Mining, and Metallurgy” were held in Freiberg, Germany (1993); Leoben, Austria (1995), Saint Petersburg (1997), Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia (1999), Golden, Colorado (2000), Idria, Slovenia (2002) and Leiden, Netherlands. The next are planned in Schwaz, Tyrol (2005) and Laval (2007). However, these are by individual efforts and there is no specific organization behind these activities.

The new Research Unit has undertaken the following responsibilities:

- To study and evaluate historical documents which should result in publication of articles or display of exhibits.
- To encourage young engineers to study this history.
- To prepare a permanent exhibit on the Canadian history of mining and metallurgy.
- To display historical posters and photographs.
- To create audio-visual material.
- To host mining and metallurgical exhibitions and workshops.
- To act as a center for attracting research workers dealing with this history.
- To create a Biographical Dictionary for Mining and Metallurgy.

The research unit is therefore soliciting donations and financial support from industry, government, and individuals in addition to the moral support. It should be sent to: Patrimoine des Mines et de la Métallurgie, Faculté des sciences et de génie, Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada G1K 7P4

All other correspondence should be directed to: Fathi Habashi, Department of Mining, Metallurgical, and Materials Engineering, Laval University, Quebec City, Canada G1K 7P4, Tel. (418) 656-7269, Fax: (418) 656-5343, E-mail: Fathi.Habashi@gmn.ulaval.ca
Mining and metallurgical heritage research unit is organized at Laval University

Fathi Habashi, professor emeritus in Laval University's Department of Mining, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, has organized a Mining and Metallurgical Heritage research unit. The new research unit will collect, classify, safeguard and disseminate all types of documents pertaining to the history of Canadian mining and metallurgy. It will act as a center for research workers dealing with the history of mining and metallurgy and will host the Ninth International Symposium on Cultural Heritage of Mining and Metallurgy in 2007.

The research unit will prepare a permanent exhibit on the history of mining and metallurgy in Canada that displays historical posters and photographs. It will also hold workshops for students and secondary school teachers on the history of the Canadian mineral industry and encourage young engineers to study the history of mining and metallurgy.

The unit is also planning a biographical dictionary to preserve the contribution of Canadians involved in the industry.

The group is soliciting donations and financial support from industry, government and individuals. Financial support should be sent to Patrimoine des Mines et de la Metallurgie, Faculte des sciences et de genie, Universite Laval, Quebec City, PQ Canada G1K 7P4.

All other correspondence should be directed to Fathi Habashi, Department of Mining, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Laval University, Quebec City, Canada G1K 7P4, phone 418-656-7269, fax 418-656-5343, e-mail fathi.habashi@gms.ulaval.ca.
Création d'une unité de recherche sur le Patrimoine des mines et métallurgie

Le professeur émérite Fathí Habashi nous annonce la création d'une unité de recherche intitulée Patrimoine des mines et métallurgie, dont le siège est situé à la Faculté des sciences et de génie de l'Université Laval. Cette nouvelle unité de recherche recueillera, classifiera, conservera et diffusera tout type de document pertinent sur l'histoire des mines et de la métallurgie au Canada. Elle réunira les chercheurs intéressés à cette histoire et sera l'hôte en 2007 du 9e Symposium international sur l'héritage culturel dans le domaine des mines et de la métallurgie.

L'unité a également en projet l'organisation d'une exposition permanente, la publication d'un dictionnaire biographique des Canadiens qui ont contribué au développement de l'industrie des mines et de la métallurgie ainsi que l'organisation d'ateliers destinés aux étudiants et aux enseignants du secondaire. Il veut aussi encourager les jeunes ingénieurs à s'intéresser à l'histoire de ce secteur. Le groupe sollicite l'aide financière de l'industrie des gouvernements et des particuliers. Pour information, s'adresser à Fathí Habashi, Département des mines et de la métallurgie, Université Laval. Tél. : (418) 656-7269.