

Chim Chimney Chim Chimney Chim Chim Cheroo

by Lynne Belluscio

If you live in Le Roy, you may not have noticed that a prominent part of the skyline has disappeared. The tall smokestack behind the Wolcott Street School has disappeared – brick by brick.

In fact, Bruno DeFazio stopped by the other day and presented one of the bricks to the Historical Society for our small – but growing collection of architectural “refuse”. (It joins a brick from the foundation of the Fort Hill School; a tile from the roof of the power plant of the Jell-O factory; a copper downspout from an unidentified house; wooden hand-split shingles from the McPherson homestead on Oatka Trail, metal railings from the old Main Street

ty bad shape and had corroded badly in some places and the only thing holding it together were the large metal bands. But the dismantling of the school chimney was uneventful in comparison with the dynamiting of the 180 foot chimney of the Le Roy Salt Company on April 2, 1966. The work was done by the Scufari Construction Company of Niagara Falls. “Three shrill blasts on an air whistle signaled the area was



bridge, the cement cornice from the 1908 Main Street bridge and a large limestone keystone from the Le Roy Agricultural works.

I suspect we have more laying around, but these are the ones I can think of off the top of my head - and just as a note - I am not actively looking to collect this kind of stuff unless it is most unusual.)

Actually the brick is pretty neat. It's not the usual 4x8 brick because the chimney was round, so it's rounded. I suspect that it is a special type of brick made just for round chimneys. The Wolcott Street School was built in 1925 and according to the August 1925 issue of the *LeRoy Gazette*, was built of “Kittanning” brick. Bruno said that the chimney was in pret-

clear and a second later the blast was detonated and the old chimney began its descent. It slowly toppled to the northwest, broke in the center after tilting about 20 degrees and soon was just a pile of bricks and mortar ready for the clean-up by the bulldozers . . .”

Originally there were three square chimneys at the Salt Company. Perhaps after one of the fires, one was demolished and replaced with the round one which was built in the early 1920s. The two square chimneys were leveled in the late 1940s or early 1950s. And the charge had been set to topple the round one, but for some reason the blast was called off and the explosives were removed and the lonely tower remained as a reminder of the

once active Salt Company until 1966.

The chimneys were needed for the 19 huge boilers that provided steam and power. The boilers required 125 tons of coal a day. The one photograph shows the three chimneys belching black smoke which must have annoyed the women with their white wash hung out on the lines. Surrounding the salt works were endless brine storage vats built on stilts. A huge shed provided storage for over 200,000 bushels of salt. Just to supply the coal for the boilers,

the Salt Company had a coal trestle that could accommodate seven gondola cars that could dump the coal into bins directly below the trestle.

I'm not sure how much coal the school boiler used, but the notes in the *Gazette* mentions that they used soft coal. I've tried to find pictures of the school chimney, but photographers were pretty good at hiding it or taking pictures from an angle that obliterated it. This post card shows the chimney, hidden for the most part behind a tree.

