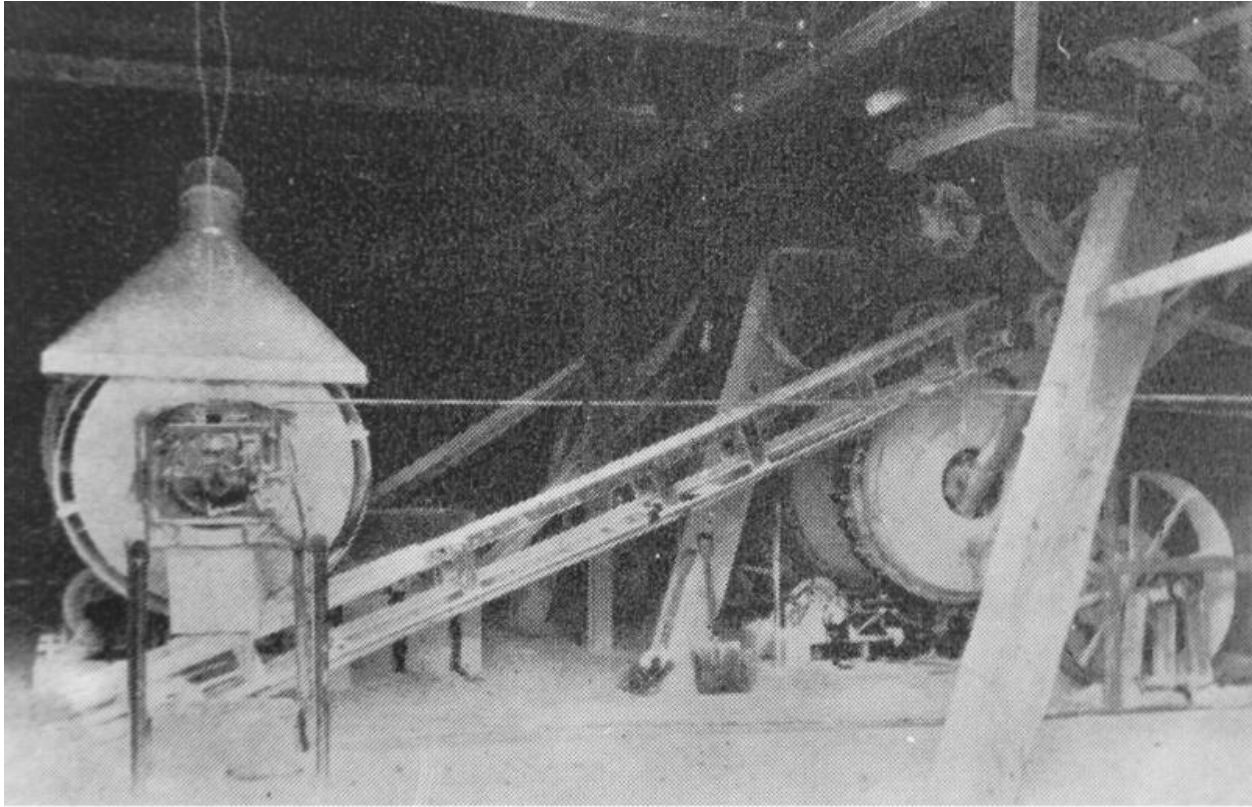


Photo of the Month

Silica Mining



American Silica Mine,
Near Rogers, 1920s
Neg. # N007787

Natural resources have been an important part of Rogers' history. Lumber, agricultural products, and water contributed to the development of this community. Mineral wealth also boosted the local economy. Pictured at right is milling equipment used by the American Silica Mine to process silica in the 1920s.

Silica is a white or colorless crystalline compound, often chalk-like in nature, which is ground into a fine powder and used in rubbing and buffing agents, paints, glass, and concrete. It also found use in the oil industry as a mud compound used to line drilling shafts. Interestingly, silica is capable of absorbing its weight in water.

According to a mid-1930s newspaper article, "The deposit near Rogers is found on top of a hill of some 157 acres and outcrops in the ravines on the slopes of the hill. It is covered with a few feet of overburden made up of weathered material. At this time it is being mined through a shaft sunk into the deposit about 25 feet, with several drifts leading from this shaft at a point about 18 feet below the surface." Tests from this period indicated that there was approximately 2,500,000 to 10,000,000 tons of

the material at the site in deposits 10 to 85 feet thick.

The mid 1930s newspaper article further described the milling process, “The material is first hand shoveled into a tube or pebble mill where it is wet-ground to a fine mesh. This grinding is done by filling the mill, which is lined with silica bricks, with silica pebbles and adding water and rotating the mill which is mounted upon steel tires that rest on steel wheels or rollers.” Power for the mills was provided by electric motors. After being pulverized, the silica was then sent up elevators to dryers, where the particles were separated by air blowers. The finished product was sacked in 100 pound bags before being sent to market.

Several silica mining companies were here during the twentieth century and most of the operations seem to have been located east of Rogers along Pleasant Ridge Road in the area known today as Beaver Shores. By the mid-1950s to late 1960s, the Corona Silica Plant, the International Purasil, Inc., managed by Merlyn H. Kile, and Mid-Western Minerals/Mills, owned by Bob Dobbs, mined and processed silica in the Rogers area.