

Outcrops

**An Eternally Incomplete
Compendium of Ontario
Shield Climbing Esoterica**



Blind River Rock

**Granary Lake, Duborne Lake
and Lake Lauzon,
Blind River, Ontario**

By Danylo Darewych

“Other than Bon Echo, Rattlesnake Point and the Gatineau, climbing areas in Ontario have been relatively unexplored. Now that winter travel and camping have become more extensive, rock and ice climbing can be found in many places in Ontario, especially along the southern limits of the Canadian Shield. ... we have been able to explore and climb many rock outcrops and faces in the area stretching from Deep River to Lake Superior, from Cobalt to south of Algonquin Park. It seems the more you look the more possibilities crop up, almost by “wishful thinking”. The type of rock varies from the solid red granite of the Shield to limestone and the magnificent white quartzite of Espanola and Killarney Park.”

Uwe Embacher, *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1977

“Alive in the superunknown
First it steals your mind
And then it steals your soul”

Soundgarden, *Superunknown*, 1994

Disclaimer

WARNING! Rock climbing is, by its very nature, a potentially hazardous activity. Climbing can result in severe injury or death. You do so at your own risk.

Prior and competent knowledge in the use of various rock climbing safety devices is assumed. It is absolutely essential that individuals participating in such activities make themselves aware of the risks and accept these and their responsibility for their own actions and involvement.

The information contained within is NOT climbing instruction. The author of this guide and any contributors to this guide accept no liability whatsoever for actions taken by individuals based upon information presented in this guidebook. Users of this guide must be responsible for learning all the appropriate techniques required to climb the particular route they have chosen to attempt.

There are no warranties, whether expressed or implied, that this guide is accurate or that the information contained in it is reliable. Your use of this guide indicates your assumption of risk, that it may contain errors, and is an acknowledgement of your own sole responsibility for your climbing safety. By use of this guide, you release the author and any contributors to this guide from liability for any injury, including death, that might result. The user assumes all risks arising from the use of this guide.

Front Cover: The main face of Old Baldy on Lake Lauzon, Blind River, Ontario

Back Cover: Mike Grainger leading up *Supersoaker*, Old Baldy, Lake Lauzon.

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If you have any additions, corrections, questions etc, please feel free to contact me (Danylo Darewych) at dedokvadratu@yahoo.ca

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Introduction

This mini-guidebook provides a description of the rock climbing and rock climbing possibilities at cliffs near the town of Blind River, in the district of Algoma, Ontario. There are some very nice cliffs located on the lakes and in the woods north of Blind River. They are mostly undeveloped, and would provide plenty of opportunity for new routes, if you're looking for a climbing adventure off the beaten track. The cliffs described in this mini-guidebook are:

- 1) Lake Lauzon (Old Baldy)
- 2) Granary Lake (Northwest Cliff, South Cliff, North Cliffs)
- 3) North of Duborne Lake

General Location-Directions

The area covered in this guidebook is located roughly midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, approximately 20 km north of the town of Blind River. Blind River is located on the north shore of Lake Huron.



From Toronto drive north to Sudbury on Highway 400/69 (about 380 km), then west on Hwy 17 (the Trans-Canada) in the direction of Sault Ste. Marie to Blind River (another 160 km). You can do the drive in 5.5 hours if you don't stop.

The cliffs/climbing areas are all located 12-20 km north of Blind River.



Map showing the location of rock climbing cliffs in the vicinity of the town of Blind River.

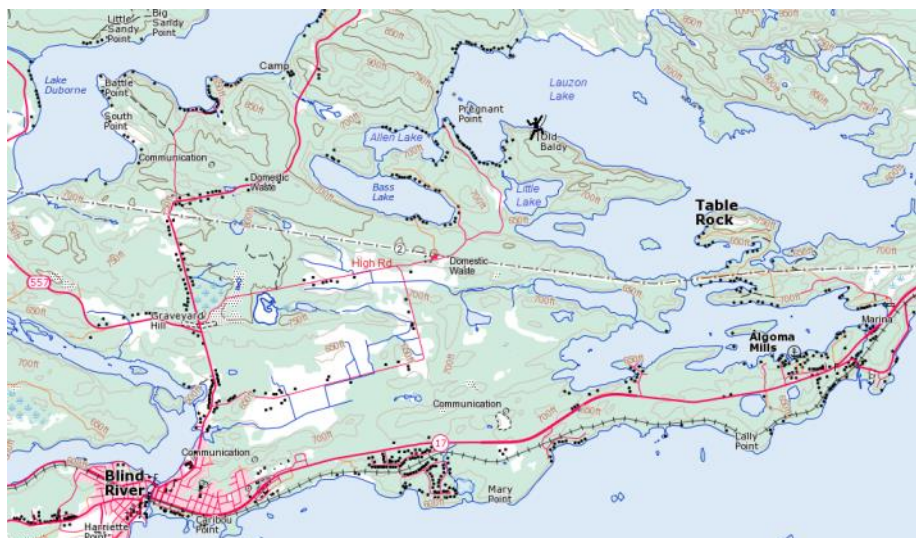
Lake Lauzon - Old Baldy



Old Baldy is the high point of a long discontinuous cliff line that runs for over 2 km along a peninsula in the north-western part of Lake Lauzon. The cliff line varies in height from 15 m to 60 m. In many places the cliff rises straight out of the water, but there is a continuous section of 500 m below the highest section of cliff where there is land at the base, some 20-30 m from the shoreline. The rock is slabby and compact, between 75° and 90° in steepness, with many features and cracks, although many of the crack lines are not continuous. The cliff's far western end is called Pregnant Point (you'll understand why when you see it). There is good potential for lots of interesting routes at Old Baldy, especially if you have a drill to place bolts on the slabby sections between protectable features. The cliff faces north-east. It gets morning sun and shade in the afternoon - useful to know for climbing on hot summer days.

Location/Directions

From Blind River head north on Hwy 557 (Woodward Ave), and keep going straight onto Granary Lake Rd when Highway 557 makes a sharp turn to the left (west), 3 km north of town. Almost immediately turn right (east) onto High Rd at the cemetery. Drive east along High Rd. After about 5 km the road will make a leftward (northward) turn near a hydro line. Follow the main road to its end, by-



passing a left-hand turn to Bass Lake. The road ends at a public boat launch on Lake Lauzon after 10 km.

Turn off High Road about 9 km from Blind River (1 km before the boat launch) onto a side road/driveway marked number 1677 (there are 6 names on this driveway). Park on the side of the main road. It's approximately 7 km from the Granary Lake Rd, 10 km total from Blind River.

Approach

The cliff itself appears to be on Crown Land, but you are crossing private prop-

Map of the approach to Old Baldy. White - cottage road. Black - trail.



erty to get to it, so please be on your best behaviour.

Walk down the side road/driveway for 700 m, past a fork to the left, then past a house on the right and another on the left on the lake until you reach a spot where a slabby rock rib comes down to the road on the right next to a telephone pole at the top of small incline (and 25 m before you reach a parking garage on the left). It's about a 10 minute walk to this point.

Walk up the slabby rock rib that runs perpendicular to the road on the right side of the road. Cairns appear almost immediately. Follow them to the top of the rock rib, then through some fairly open forest and then onto open slabs of rock.* The trail is fairly well beaten in and well marked with cairns. It brings you to the top of Old Baldy and a nice view northward across Lake Lauzon. The trail to the top of Old Baldy is about 750 m long and takes 15 minutes to hike.

Rappel/Descent options. The approach brings you to the top of the Old Baldy cliff. You have to rappel or scramble down to the base in order to climb. It's easier and safer to rappel.

a) You can make a full 60 m rappel from almost directly below the high point knob of Old Baldy, as outlined in the description for the *Unicorn*.

b) To rappel from a tree, wind your way down on climber's right from the high point knob to the right shoulder of Old Baldy. Find a solid tree from which to rappel and lower down (it's about a 45 m rappel from the shoulder). This should put you near the start of *Slowpoke*.

c) It is possible to scramble down to the base even further climber's right, but this is unadvisable, especially if you are here for the first time, because the descent is sketchy and inobvious. This is also your escape route back up, if you can't climb your way to the top for some reason. It is also possible to rappel from trees to



The line of *Delinquents' Delight*. The first pitch is obscured by trees.

climber's left of the high point of Old Baldy at the top of the route *Doubting Thomas* (see below).

Routes

Ten routes has been climbed thus far, but there is potential for many more, as the face is riddled with cracks. The problem is that most of these cracks don't quite reach the ground. Trying to figure out from the top which crack reaches the base of the cliff or which crack you've succeeded in gaining from the base is the riddle.

The routes are described from left to right.

Delinquents' Delight, 5.7/5.8, 60 m, 2 pitches

(Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, May 22, 2023)

Located about 150 m climber's left of all the other climbs. The easiest way to find it is from the top. From the high point of Old Baldy head skier's right for 150 m to the far side of the next high point along the cliff line. Look for a stand of cedar trees on a ledge below this next high point. Rappel from the biggest cedar in the stand. You will be rappelling about 4 m to climber's left of the route.

- Pitch 1, 5.8, 33 m. Start left of a couple of birches and a cedar. Head leftwards up some easy, dirty mossy ledges (or up the steeper short face on the left), sling a thin cedar 4 m up, then continue leftward up steeper, dirty ledges to a second, sturdier cedar (not the much bigger one further left), step up and then trend back right and follow a crack system upwards on smaller edges past two bolts to a belay on a larger ledge. Two bolt belay station (no rap rings).

- Pitch 2, 5.5, 25 m. Continue up the crack system, which is now much wider. The angle of the pitch gets progressively easier as you get higher, but the crack system is choked with sod and moss, so be prepared to make sketchy steps onto



The central part of the main face of Old Baldy. A) *Supersoaker*, B) *Squirt Gun*, C) *Doubting Thomas*, D) *Scorpion*, E) *Unicorn* F) *Slowpoke*. The dotted lines on the right are lines which we have top-roped and which we feel would be good candidates for sport routes, if anybody is interested in bolting them.



Mike Grainger leading *Supersoaker*, August 30, 2018. The left photo shows the mossy ledges at the start of the route, right photo is a little higher in the main corner system. Below: The upper part of *Supersoaker*.

tufts of grass and to run it out a bit between placements (or bring a trowel and start excavating). Belay from the stand of cedar trees you rappelled from.

Supersoaker, 5.8, 53 m (Mike Grainger, Chris Talbot, Danylo Darewych, July 6, 2020).

Located on the left side of the main face at Old Baldy, not underneath the high point knob, but under the left shoulder (climber's left). From the high point walk skier's right down the shoulder to the first major strip/gully of vegetation. Walk down this strip (blueberries!) and as you turn the shoulder look for two bolts at shoulder height in the wall on your left just past a slight birch. These mark the top-out of *Supersoaker*.

Warning: If rappelling from the top to the ground with double ropes be aware that the ropes have a tendency to get hung up on a small knob at the mid-way belay stance when being pulled from the ground. We have yet to hammer off this small knob.

If you're at the base of the cliff, the start of the route can be found by walking about 30 m left of the base of *Unicorn* or 12 m left of *Doubting Thomas* – look for a slightly more open area with a stand of 3-4 birches (one big and old, one with a 90 degree bend in the trunk down low; also an *S* scratched into the rock/moss; there is also a big pine growing on ledge 10 m up and slightly right of the start) and big debris cone of dirt and moss.

- Pitch 1, 20 m, 5.5. Climb mossy ledges/ramp for 5 m and gain a left-facing corner system. Climb up it to a belay stance some 6 m below an overhang (two bolts). Pro is a little sparse and fiddly.
- Pitch 2, 33 m, 5.7/5.8. Make an awkward move off the belay, climb up to the over-



hang, pull over the overhang/roof on good edges, continue up the crack/corner system above (3 bolts) and finish up on slabby terrain along a line of small birches on your right.

Protection: Nuts, cams up to #4 Camelot, a generous selection of small cams, including offsets.

Squirt Gun, 5.8, 45 m (Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, August 30, 2018)

The first pitch is the same as for *Supersoaker*. From the belay at the top of the first pitch, step right to exit the corner onto a thinner, right-angling crack. Follow this to the top. Beware of some detached flakes at the start of the right-leaning crack (we both stood on these and they didn't move, but they're clearly detached). Belay at trees. Wander up grassy ledges around low-angled slabs to the top (or climb the slabs, if you wish, for another 10-12 m) to the *Supersoaker* anchors.

Doubting Thomas, 5.7/5.8, 48 m (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, July 9, 2019).

Located beneath the left side of the head of Old Baldy. From the top of Old Baldy, wind your way down to the left shoulder of Old Baldy and find a wide, grassy, partially treed ledge that angles gently back below the head Old Baldy. The top of the route is found midway between two clumps of birches about 7-8 m apart, and 6-7 metres back from the cliff edge (N46° 13.538' W82° 51.898'). We anchored off the (climber's) left side birches. There will be two crack systems below you as you rappel. The route climbs the left one. If you're walking along the base, look for a small belay platform of flat rocks at your feet, or for a fat cedar with a U-bend at its base growing out of the cliff 7-8 metres up and a bolt 4-5 m up (3-4 m rightwards of the cedar).

Climb up to the first bolt, then angle right to short corner and follow two more bolts up to the left. Cross rightward across some hollow-sounding blocks (we pulled and stepped on them, but tread gently) past a semi-hidden bolt and then follow the crack to the top. The crux is at a thin crack where the wall steepens - climb the easier face just to the left of the crack. The angle eases considerably afterwards.

Gear: Lots of small cams (little blue #1 TCU, little blue .3 Camelot, black Totem), doubles of the .5 and .75 Camelot, singles from #1-4).

Tip Top Thomas, 5.10a, 10 m (Dave Marrone, Kielyn Marrone, May 18, 2023).

A continuation of *Doubting Thomas*. From the ledge with the birches climb the final small face above to the top of the "head" of Old Baldy. "It's not long and starts out a bit blocky, but there's a few metres of really nice finger crack there." DM

Scorpion, 5.8/5.9,* 50 m (FA Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, August 2, 2020).

This route climbs a line 3-5 m right of *Doubting Thomas*, however the start at the base is about 10 m right of *Doubting Thomas* and actually closer to the start of *Unicorn*. Rappel 60 m down the line of *Unicorn* and step climber's left 4 m to the base of a leftward-diagonal crack.

Climb up the leftward-diagonal crack (small cams) for 5-7 m to a bolt (left of a small birch). Continue upwards following a line of weakness/corner/crack system. There will be several cruxes along the way that require big, long moves onto ledges, including pulling on a small fin of rock (just very slightly loose, but keyed in) and a bigger block on the right higher up (also keyed in at the base, but tread carefully) and jamming up a wider crack (which I avoided by cockroaching to the left 1

* The 5.8 grade reflects the easier cockroach variation that avoided the wider crack (which is probably 5.9).

m, almost to *Doubting Thomas*, which is really close at this point). Two more bolts along the way protect blank sections. Near the top, clamber over easier angled ground past a birch to a grassy ledge below a final very thin exit crack in a short left-facing corner. Climb this nasty sting in the tail. Belay from the stand of birches on the big ledge below the “head” of Old Baldy.

Gear: Double rack to #3. Lots of small cams for the start and the end (I used a Wild Country 00 Dragonfly in the final crack). I can’t remember if I used a #4.

Unicorn, 5.8, 60 m, 2 pitches (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, July 5, 2018).

This route climbs a rare continuous crack system the runs almost the full height of the cliff.

Follow the cairned approach trail to the high point of Old Baldy. Seven metres down from the summit (when facing the lake) you will see a small clump of birches. Immediately to the (skier’s) left of them is a thin crack with two rappel anchors next to it. Make a full 60 m rappel to the base of the cliff. Climb straight back up, following the crack system in two pitches. Lots of good edges, ledges and stances.

- Pitch 1, 5.8, 25 m. Start slightly left of where the rappel deposits you (opposite a birch tree with some rockfall scars on the trunk side facing the cliff). There are also two *U*-s scratched into the rock at the start. You have to climb 4-5 m up on fairly easy edges before you can place a first piece of protection (a nut), then a couple of metres higher you will reach the start of the crack system. The crux of the first pitch is a small overhang/bulge $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up. Originally, this bulge was bypassed by a crack on its left and then a traverse back right into it at the top. However, the excavation of 2 small 0.3 cam placements below the bulge has made the direct line over the bulge more reasonable. There is a spot for a cam



Above: Mike Grainger leading the starting crack of *Scorpion* on an earlier attempt that was aborted due to loose rock higher up, August 30, 2018.

Below: Danylo leading the first pitch of *Unicorn*. Photo by Mike Grainger.





Left: The start of *Slowpoke*. Right: The upper cracks of *Slowpoke*.

right at the top of the crux bulge. Continue up to a small ledge with blueberries and a small birch tree. Gear belay (cams).

- Pitch 2, 5.6, 35 m. Continue following the crack system over slightly easier-angled ground, by-passing clumps of cedar and birch trees over several small ledges and topping out on a crack just 2 metres right of the original rappel crack (which you can likely climb as well, if you so choose).

Gear note: Nuts and cams from the small blue Metolius TCU to #3 blue Camalot. Offset Metolius cams are crucial for the first pitch.

Slowpoke, 5.7, 43 m (Danylo Darewych, Randy Kielbasiewicz, June 27, 2015).

This route is located below the right shoulder (climber's right) of Old Baldy, just right of the "head" bulge. You can rappel down from a clump of cedar trees just below this right shoulder. If you're looking for the start at the base, it's located about 15 m right of *Unicorn* or some 75 m left of the vegetated scramble up. Look for a small, right-leaning broken pillar/block with a flake of rock sticking out of it and a birch on top. The route starts here (N46° 13.573' W82° 51.943').

Climb up from the broken pillar/block (be careful as there is some loose, hollow rock) for 5-6 m to another big block, traverse right across it to the trees, head up past them to a short, left-facing corner with small birch. Continue up the crack system above. The climb follows this crack system to the top, although occasionally you can make use of an adjacent crack to the left. Look around carefully for the path of least resistance (double ropes useful) and for good holds hidden amongst the tufts of grass. You can stop at a lower cedar (there is someone's cordelette and a carabiner there), but it is better to belay from the higher stand of trees. If you scramble the remaining 6-8 m past them to the shoulder, you have to belay off big, slung blocks.



A photo of the right side of the main face of Old Baldy, showing the lines G) *Double Protection* (dashed), H) *Non-Binary...* and I) *Farmboy's Birthday* in relation to the central lines.

Gear: Protection is good. Take lots of pro - everything from small cams to a number 4 Camalot.

On the far end of the right shoulder is a small, slabby knob with two rappel rings on it. Two mixed routes lie below. They share a common start at a large crack and a first bolt. A short trail from the shore of the lake leads to the cliff at this point (if you come in by boat).

Double Protection, 5.10a, 33 m (Colin Shepitka and Andrew Junkin, August 2020).

The left line. Climb straight up between fractured cracks and face sections to anchors with rings. A rappel from the top anchors of *Non-Binary* links up with these anchors. Gear + 6 bolts. CS

Non-Binary, All-Inclusive Route Name, 5.10b, 55 m, 2 pitches (Colin Shepitka, Andrew Junkin, August 2020).

The right branch.

- Pitch 1: 35 m, 5 bolts. Gear anchor on a ledge.
- Pitch 2: 20 m. Climb cracks to anchors on top. CS

Farmboy's Birthday, 5.10a, 50 m, 2 pitches (FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, July 9th, 2019; FFA Dave Marrone, Kielyn Marrone, May 18, 2023).

Farmboy's Birthday is located at the climber's far right end of Old Baldy. From the top scramble down to the right shoulder of Old Baldy and then head along the clifftop for about 60 m. The top of the route lies between two tiny, spindly birch stubs (knee high) (N46° 13.567' W82° 51.956'). You can set up a gear anchor from some small cracks and rappel. If you're walking the base of the cliff, the start of the route is located at the far right end of the cliff, where the shoreline is only about 7-8 m away below you. Look for a cedar tree on the left and birches on the right several metres up, plus a ledge with a row of cedars about 17 m up.

• Pitch 1, 5.9, 18 m. Climb up to the left edge of the ledge of cedar trees, following the slight groove and crack system marked by a dark water streak. Protection is a little sparse at first (sling the cedar on the left with a long sling), but there where you need it at the difficult sections. Belay from cedar trees.

• Pitch 2, 5.10a). Traverse to the right side of the ledge. Head up 3-4 m, then awkwardly climb the left-angling crack (crux; bolt). Continue up the crack system to



Above: The two stunted birches that mark the top of *Farmboy's Birthday*.

Below: Mike Grainger starting the first pitch of *Farmboy's Birthday* and heading into the crux moves on the second pitch.





A photo of the right side of the main face, taken in winter, with the lines of *Non-Binary...* and *Farmboy's Birthday* marked on it. March 16, 2015.

the top. Climbing difficulty eases considerably at the top.



The line of *Farmboy's Birthday*.

Pregnant Point Wall

Pregnant Point lies at the very far western end of the Lake Lauzon cliff system. To the left of it a shorter wall that rises straight out of the water. It can be reached by boat or by walking west across the top from Old Baldy.



Pregnant Point Wall (I think).

Estuary Crack, 5.7, 18 m (Colin Shepitka, Andrew Junkin, June 2021).

This route is located about 25 m left of Pregnant Point. If you approach by boat, you can park the boat at the base of the crack or, if you want to top-rope the route you can scramble up at Pregnant Point and then rappel down from a tree above the route.

Climb the finger crack to the top. Rappel tree is slightly left of the top of the route. Single rack of cams.

Boat Wall



The Boat Wall is located at the east end of the cliff system in the north-west arm of Lake Lauzon. The routes on the Boat Wall were approached by boat. You could probably get to the wall overland but it would probably be a long, nasty bushwack. Head by boat towards the center of the wall where it can be beached on small rocky point. Scramble up 5 m to a treed ledge which traverses below the entire face. A path has been cleared between the trees and the face.

Routes are described from left to right.

Bow-line, 5.10d, 25 m (Hudson Mayhew, Colin Shepitka, June 2021).

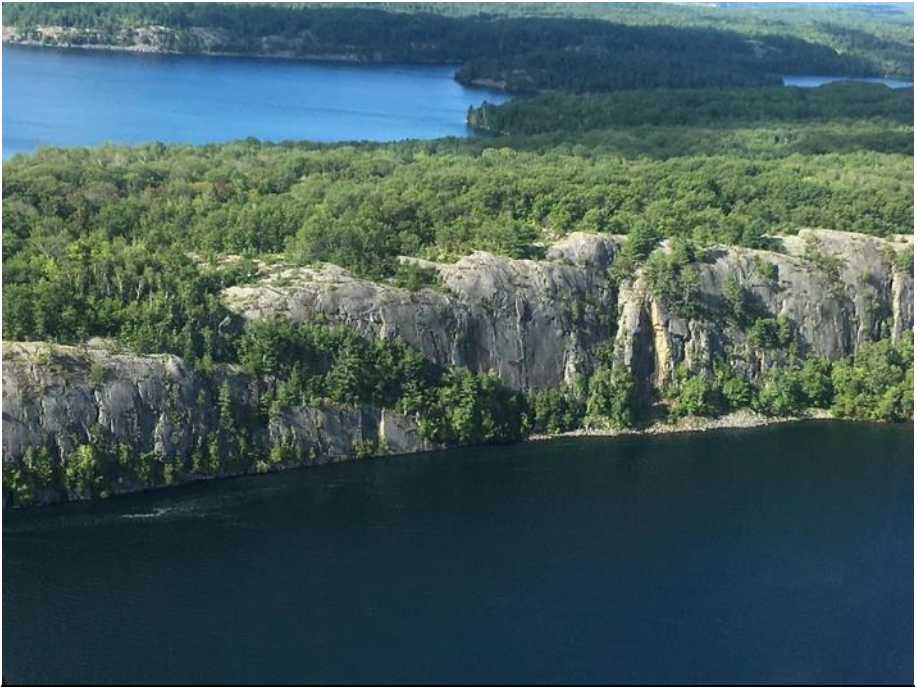
Boat access only. From the rocky point where you parked the boat head about 10 m left along the traverse ledge to a crack system. Climb the crack to the top. The crack varies from fingers to off-width to finger-tips. Good gear the whole way. Double rack of cams from 0.1 to #4 and a single set of nuts. Rappel rings.

Shepitka Slab Line, 5.11b, 30 m, mixed with 3 bolts (Mike Shepitka, Colin Shepitka, 2020). *Project – please don't climb.*

This route starts immediately above the small rocky point where you beached the boat. Start on a 10 m long finger and hand crack to two bolts as the crack disappears, pull some scary committing moves on featureless slab (crux), continue up another finger crack to a bulge with a bolt, then follow the finger crack to the top. Rappel rings. Double rack of cams from #0.2 to #3.

Motorboating, 5.8, 45 m (Mike Shepitka, Colin Shepitka, July 2020).

Traverse right along the traverse ledge to its end at a left-facing corner. Climb up the corner to a big block, climb up the left side of the block and follow a broken crack system to the top.



The Boat Wall at the east end of the Lake Lauzon cliffline, as viewed from the air. Photo taken by Marco Foladore. From climbsudbury.com

Granary Lake Rock Climbs

Granary Lake is a beautiful lake in Algoma that is lined with multiple cliffs. There are at least 4 significant cliffs along the north shore of the lake and 1 on the south shore. Most of the cliffs along the north shore require boat access, but one of the north-shore cliffs and the south shore cliff can be reached on foot.

Location/Directions

Granary Lake is located north of Blind River. From Blind River head north on Hwy 557, and keep going straight onto Granary Lake Rd when Highway 557 makes a sharp turn to the left (west) about 3 km north of town. Follow Granary Lake Rd. to Granary Lake. Where you park and access Granary Lake will depend on what cliff you're going to and how you plan on getting there. It is 15 km from Blind River to the end of the Granary Lake Road. There is a public boat launch at the south-east corner of Granary Lake, at approximately the 14.2 km mark, some 200 m past the Birch Lodge camp.

Granary Lake - North-West Cliff

As the name implies, this is the cliff located in the north-west corner of Granary Lake. The cliff face looks more broken, slightly easier-angled and more vegetated/treed than most of the other cliffs at Granary Lake. The rock also appears to be darker in colour. There are some interesting features and steeper faces on this cliff. I don't know the height of this cliff. One route has been started here by Christian and Anna from Sudbury, on a really warm weekend in February, no less. Granary Lake NW Cliff Access.

There are two possible ways of accessing the NW Cliff.

1) By boat. The easiest approach would be by boat from the Granary Lake boat launch (700 m back from the end of the Granary Lake Road). The cliff is directly across from the boat launch. It would be a short, 5-7 minute paddle in a canoe from the boat launch to the cliff on the north shore.

2) By foot. You can access the north-west corner of Granary Lake by road and then bushwalk in to the cliff. At the 10 km mark of the Granary Lake Road (13 km total from Blind River) the road will make a sharp right-hand (eastward) turn. There will be garbage/recycling bins on your left and a big sign straight ahead for Mountainview Camp. Head straight (Google has this straight extension labelled as Granary Lake Rd as well, but I don't think this is correct - Granary Lake Road turns right). There will be an immediate fork in the road ahead. The left fork goes down to Mountainview Camp – stick to the right. Continue past another left-hand fork (Shoak Rd.) and across a narrow bridge over the creek at about 900 m. After the bridge turn right (east). The road ends in about 300 m at some cottages. Here you have to either ask for permission to cross private property to reach the shoreline and then walk 250 m north along the shoreline to the cliff or simply bushwalk north through the forest for 250 m to the cliff. I've not tried either approach.



Granary Lake - South Cliff



The cliff at the south end of Granary Lake is an eye-catching cliff of mostly steep and overhanging rock. It is about 200 m long and from 15-55 m high. It is tallest at its northern end, closer to the lake. It gets shorter as it runs south away from the lake above a rising talus slope. The cliff faces west to north west. The end closest to the lake stays in the shade well into the afternoon.

Granary Lake South Access

1) *By boat.* The easiest approach would be by boat from the Granary Lake boat launch (700 m back from the end of the road) along the south shore of Granary Lake. The cliff will be easily visible from the lake after about 2.5 km. It is a short 100 m bushwack from the shore to the cliff.

2) *By foot.* A small side access trail to the Voyager Trail/Trans Canada Trail leads uphill on the right at the end of the Granary Lake Road. Follow it uphill for 200 m to the main Voyager Trail/Trans Canada Trail. Make a mental note of this junction (it is easy to miss on the way back). The Voyager Trail/Trans Canada Trail is marked with white blazes. Follow it through nice open forest. At approximately 1.1 km you will cross a small creek and then head uphill for another 200-300 m. At this point start looking for a smaller unmarked side ATV trail that heads downhill to the left (easy to miss amid the ruts and erosion channels) whereas the main Voyager Trail (white blazes) continues uphill to the right. The main Voyager Trail will eventually take you to the top of the cliff by way of a detour through big open slabby areas to Intersect Lake, but it is longer - closer to 4 km in total and 1 hour and 15 minutes of travel time, if you find the correct way down on the first try. The



smaller unmarked trail is shorter (3 km in total) and more direct – 45 minutes in total at a fast pace. The trail passes quite close (60 m) to the base of the cliff, but it can be difficult to spot the cliff through the trees if you don't know it's there. A useful marker to keep an eye out for is another side trail that heads uphill to the right of the talus field to the top of the cliff. You can access the cliff across this talus field, but it is probably easiest to continue another 75 m past this side trail to the far side of the talus field and then head to the cliff through the trees left of the talus field.

Knock Three Times, 5.7, 30 m (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, July 30, 2017).

Located more towards the right end of the main cliff line, behind the left end of a stand of cedar trees that grow right to the base of cliff here (fairly easy to walk through). Look for a right facing corner with a crack system in its left wall that



Left: A front view of the corner crack system of *Knock Three Times*. Middle: A side view of the same corner area with a view of the exit chimney. Right: Mike Grainger about to exit the chimney.

ends at a ledge at the top an attached pinnacle.

- Pitch 1, 5.7, 20 m. Climb the corner and crack system to the ledge at the top of the pinnacle. The crux is at the start. There are a bunch of loose-looking blocks at the top of the crack. We trundled most of the loose ones, but knock three times to check the remaining ones.

- Pitch 2, 5.7, 10 m. Climb the chimney above the right side of the ledge, swinging out onto the right face of the big block forming the chimney to exit it.

Gear note: Nuts and cams up to #4, including doubles of #2 and #3 sized Camalots (save at least one for the belay at the top of the first pitch).

Granary Lake - North Cliffs

A prominent and long series of cliffs runs along the north shore of Granary Lake. All told, there is probably close to 1 km of cliff along the north shore, ranging in height from 20-50 m. The rock has very good friction. Most of these cliffs rise straight out of the water. You will need a boat to access these cliffs. There is a public boat launch on the south-west corner of Granary Lake. Or you can comfortably climb at these cliffs on a sunny day from late February to early April by walking across the frozen lake ice.

Only five rock climbing routes have been climbed so far on these cliffs. The cliffs are also home to many excellent ice climbs in the winter.



The Flag Face at the left end of the main cliff. *I Gave my Nuts to Canada* is located here.

I Gave My Nuts to Canada, 5.9+, 40 m (FA Randy Kielbasiewicz, Danylo Darewych, June 26, 2015).

Head across the lake to the left end of the main cliff line that runs along the middle of the north shore of Grannary Lake. There is a big Canadian flag painted at the top of the cliff face here and a convenient base of talus blocks to moor a boat. The route is located right of the Canadian flag (which is covered by the ice route *Go Go Beavers* in the winter).

Make a tricky move down low to gain a thin crack. Follow the crack upwards until an overlap forces you to make a friction move left (a big cam - #4? Camalot is needed here). Continue up to the top. The crack takes good nuts (in fact, we couldn't remove several of them even with a hammer - they should still be fixed in place).

Antsy Pansy, 5.8, 25 m (Mike Park, July 2023).

Located about 20 m right of *I Gave My Nuts to Canada*. A boat is needed to access this climb. It has a few decent sized loose rocks, but overall is not too dirty. Very fun with great protection. Tree. belay. Rappel from same tree from a sling with a maillon. *MP*



Above: The line of *I Gave My Nuts to Canada*.
Below: The line of *Antsy-Pansy*.





Left and below: The Water Wall - more cliff along the north shore of Granary Lake, right of the Flag Face. Right: *Face for Radio*. Photo from Mitch Lemieux.

Face for Radio, 5.9, 15 m

(FA Mitch Lemieux, Mike Park, June 2024)

About 50 meters right of the Canada Flag the rock becomes less vertical and more slabby. Belay from a canoe, or climb up 10 feet to a ledge. Work your way up from the belay ledge to right, following the thin crack that snakes its way through the rock. Moves are very footwork intensive and balancy. Once you reach the large boulder that makes an off-width crack, traverse right and up to belay off of the pine tree. Watch for loose rock at the top.

Gear: Cams up to #2. *ML*

Hot Leaves, 5.6, 50 m, 2 pitches

(Danylo Darewych, Mark Hurst, April 10, 2023)

Located some 200 m right of the big Canadian flag at a prominent left-trending break/ramp/crack system. We climbed this route in early spring after approaching over the frozen lake ice, but couldn't start directly at the base of the crack, because there was open water there. We scrambled up 4-5 m onto a big treed ledge some 25 m left of the corner and then walked 5 m right along it to the base of a slab.

- Pitch 1, 5.2, 20 m. Weave your way up the slab to a ledge system 10-12 m up and traverse right along it to the ramp/crack feature. Gear anchor.

- Pitch 2, 5.6, 37 m. Head up the left-trending ramp/crack system, overcoming a couple of vertical steps to a big ledge, then continue up a short, steep face on your right. Beware the big, loose flake at the base of this short face - I neglected to trundle it while second-





Hot Leaves

ing. You can also exit more easily up a short, broken ramp. Tree belay.

Rappel from trees to descend. We used two ropes, but you could probably do 2 single rope rappels further to climber's left.

Screech, 5.6/5.7, 40 m

(Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Aug. 31, 2015).

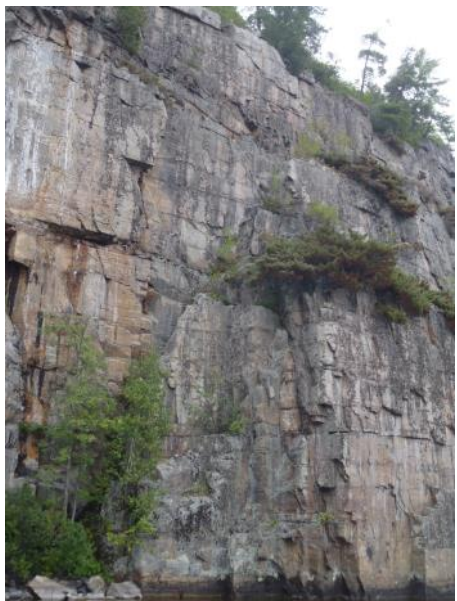
Starts in a small alcove (5 m wide) with a couple of trees right at the water's edge, some 300 m right of the big Canadian flag painted at the top of the cliff face. Climb up a crack system that heads up to the right crossing 3 ledges. At the start of third ledge head straight up a right-facing corner. Belay from a solid pine right at the top of the route.

Rappel: Make a 33 m rappel back to the base of the alcove from a tree located 12m (skier's) right of the top of the route (you can use a 60 m rope and downclimb the last 4 m). Ignore the screeching of the irate falcon whose dining room you are crossing (the bones of his victims litter the ledges).

Natty Daddy, 5.10b

(Mitch Lemieux, Mike Park, June 2024)

Located about 50 m of *Screech* or about 400 m to the right of the Canada Flag, on the far right end of a short, 50 m wide, left-facing (west-facing) wall. On the far right of this wall there are two splitter cracks with a lower ledge, and a large tree laying horizontally at the top. The crack on the right is *Natty Daddy*. There is a green cam welded into the crack about halfway up that was lost on the first ascent. Belay from the flat rock at the bottom. A #0 cam placed at head height is convenient for anchoring your boat, and for preventing the climber and belayer from fall-



The section of cliff where *Screech* is located. *Screech* starts at the clump of trees at water's edge and heads up and right past the left end of the lower evergreen bush to the highest ledge (with another bush), at the left end of which it heads up a right-facing corner.

ing into the water. Climb up on good ledges and solid gear until the crack widens and fills with dirt. Pull the crux move to the face on the right until you can gain the ledge above. Continue on to the top where a single bolt marks the end of the climb.

Gear: Cams from #0.4 to #2.



A climber dry-tooling up the line of *Natty Daddy* in February 2023.

Stone Wave



The Stone Wave is another interesting cliff found on the north shore of Granary Lake. It is located another 600-700 m east of the main cliff line past two small points of land. It is set about 50-75 m back from the lakeshore. The left end is broken and slabby. The section right of centre has steep, very solid rock with several horizontal undulating waves in it. There is a prominent roof at the right end. There is actually a long, low (5-8 m high) cliff band running in front of the main cliff which impedes direct access to the cliff face. This low cliff line is most easily bypassed on the left.

North of Duborne Lake Cliff



The cliff north of Duborne Lake as viewed from Fire Tower Mountain

“The North of Duborne Lake Cliff” is a fairly large and fairly remote cliff hidden in the woods north of Duborne Lake in Algoma, Ontario. It is about 600 m long and likely about 45 m tall at its highest point. There is currently only one rock climbing route on the cliff, but potential for many more. It’s a bit of a hike to get to (1 hour), but worth the effort.

Location/Directions

Duborne Lake is located north of Blind River. In Blind River take Highway 557 north (Woodward Ave. in town). At 3 km Highway 557 will turn sharply left (west), but keep going straight instead onto Granary Lake Rd. Follow Granary Lake Rd. north. After another 10 km (13 km total from Blind River) the road will make a sharp right-hand (eastward) turn. There will be garbage/recycling bins on your left and a big sign straight ahead for Mountainview Camp. Head straight (Google has this straight extension labelled as Granary Lake Rd as well, but I don’t think this is correct - Granary Lake Road turns right). There will be an immediate fork in the road ahead. The left fork goes down to Mountainview Camp – stick to the right. Continue past another left-hand fork (Shoak Rd.) and across a narrow bridge over the creek at about 900 m, turn left (west) once over the bridge and follow the road to its end near some cottage driveways another kilometer along. You will pass an official Voyageur Trail parking area on the way, but I’ve always simply parked at the end of the road. There is space there for a couple of cars. Just make sure you don’t block any driveways.

Approach Trail

There will be a wide ATV/hiking trail straight in front of you. Follow this. It’ll head uphill and to the left, cross a small stream and bring you to the shore of Black Lake after about 600-700 m. The wider ATV trail will continue straight ahead



while a narrower hiking trail cuts off to the left. Take the narrower hiking trail. It will start to head steeply uphill. The trail is well marked with blazes (white I believe) and well-travelled. After about another 1 km you will come to a fork near an interpretive sign for the Voyager Trail/Trans Canada Trail.

At this point, the shortest way to the cliffs north of Duborne Lake is actually along the main Voyager Trail to the right. However, if you're coming here for the first time it might be useful to follow the side trail (blue blazes?) straight ahead/left which leads to the top of Fire Tower Mountain on the north shore of Duborne Lake where an old fire tower used to stand. Not only are the views across Duborne Lake and Granary Lake beautiful, but if you turn around and look north-west you will also get a good view of the cliff you're headed for. This will give you a sense of what direction you should be walking. From the top of Fire Tower Mountain you can pick up a fainter, not-so-well marked trail down the other side of the mountain from whence you came. This will head downhill and reconnect with the main Voyager Trail. Turn left onto the main trail. This detour to the top is about 650 m long and adds about 50 m of elevation gain.

If you don't go to the top of Fire Tower Mountain, the main Voyager Trail simply contours around the back of the mountain. You will pass the far side trail from the top after about 180 m. The trail will start heading gently downhill. At this point it is less well travelled and harder to follow in places, especially since the forest is fairly open. After about 200 m you will start to pass a short (10-15 m) cliffline on your left. There is some good-looking rock here, but this is not your destination. Continue on for another 400-500 m as the trail heads downhill. At this point things get tricky because you will have to leave the trail and strike out through the forest in a north-westerly direction. Look for an open rocky slab outcrop on your right. From this slabby outcrop you should be able to look northward and spot the south end of the cliff you're headed for - it's only about 100-150 m away through fairly open forest.

The total hike is about 2.8 km with 130 m of elevation gain. It'll take close to an hour.

Incidentally, if you continue along the Voyager Trail further downhill another 200 m and strike out left through the forest (at another bald slabby spot) you will hit another cliff. If I recall correctly it's about 25 m tall. I'm not sure how long it is, because I never walked all the way along it, since the going was fairly tough along talus blocks and steep slopes. I suspect that it's not that long and becomes broken

fairly quickly.

It's also possible to get to the "north of Duborne Lake cliff" from the west. From a parking area for the Voyageur Trail along Highway 557 north of Upper Cranberry Lake you follow first the Voyageur Trail and then an ATV trail east to the north end of the cliff. However, this approach is longer and without any visible landmarks for when to break off the trail towards the cliff.

Cliff Description

As stated in the introduction, the cliff is about 600 m long and around 45 m high at its tallest point (this is an estimate). The highest point is roughly in the middle (N46° 16.403' W82° 53.923'). The cliff is lower at either end, where it tapers down to 10-15 m. There are quite a few corner systems, buttresses and terraces along the cliff. Not all of the corner systems have cracks. For example, the corner in the tallest face does not appear to have a crack. There is almost no talus at the base of the cliff and it is fairly easy to walk along the base of the cliff or fairly close to it. A major exception is the talus below the tallest face. Unfortunately, there is also some poison ivy in the corner at the base of the tallest section (but not overly much – it could be fairly quickly chopped down with a set of shears). There are also some lovely boulders scattered in the forest below the tall face. Towards the north end of the cliff system there is a pronounced gully (N46° 16.527' W82° 53.790') which can be used to access the north end of the cliff. I am not sure what the rock composition is. The cliff faces south-east. The forest below the cliff is pleasant – it's composed of deciduous trees and is quite open with little underbrush.

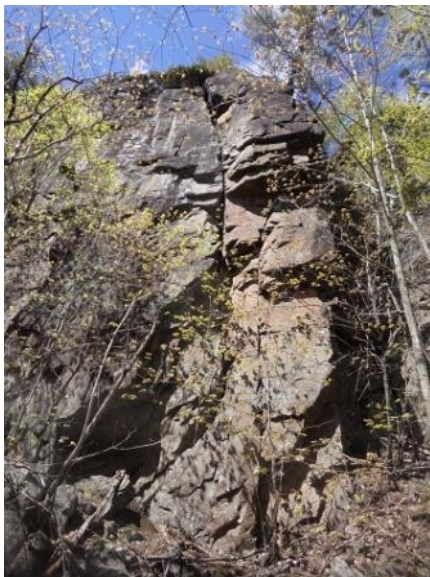
Route Descriptions

Only one route has been climbed at the cliff so far. There are many more potential lines. The route that has been climbed is in the gully at the north end of the cliff. It is the first crack you come to on the right wall of the gully, just left of a buttress.

Juniper Man, 5.9/5.10, 25(?) m (FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, May 17, 2016. FFA Ashwin Freyne, Michael Greenwood, July 2016).

Starts as a nice crack line, degenerates into a swim through juniper bushes, hence the name. Neither Mike Grainger nor myself climbed this cleanly – there was a lot of dirt and some hard moves half-way up the crack. Ashwin and Michael, however, did.

"I hear of your Escarpment ancient cedars, but I'm a juniper man, myself." *MG*



The line of *Juniper Man*.



Above left Mike Grainger leading *Juniper Man*, May 17, 2016.

Top right and below: Other unclimbed faces and boulders at Duborne Lake North.



Geology*

As a climber, I've become used to referring to all cliffs beyond the limestone of the Niagara Escarpment as being granite. In fact, this guidebook was originally subtitled "An Eternally Incomplete Compendium of Ontario Granite Esoterica." I had always assumed that the Canadian Shield, the ancient bedrock of central and northern Ontario (and of much of Canada), was entirely made up of granite. It turns out that both my assumption and the subtitle were incorrect. They are especially untrue of the cliffs described in this guidebook on the area north of Huron. The cliffs aren't granite.

The geology of the region is, in fact, much more complex and more interesting.

First, some general background information on the Canadian Shield.

Geologists divide the Canadian Shield in Ontario into 3 areas or provinces: the Superior Province, the Southern Province and the Grenville Province.

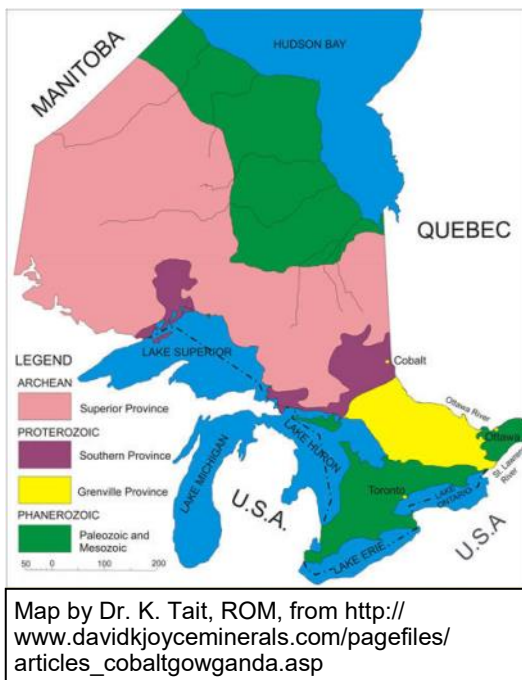
The Superior Province is the oldest and largest part (70%) of the Canadian Shield. It was formed between 4.5 billion and 2.49 billion years ago. It stretches north and west of Sudbury. It is composed primarily of intrusive igneous rocks and is indeed predominantly granite.

The second oldest is the Southern Province which was formed between 2.49 billion and 570 million years ago. It stretches in a narrow band from Sault St. Marie along the north shore of Lake Huron, past Sudbury and then north to Kirkland Lake, but is also found in two spots north of Lake Superior. It is composed primarily of sedimentary rocks, but also partially of volcanic rocks.

The youngest part of the Canadian Shield is the Grenville Province. It was formed 1 billion to 570 million years ago. It stretches from south of Sudbury through Algonquin Park and to the St. Lawrence River (in Eastern Ontario). It is composed of metamorphic rock in its northern part; and of sedimentary and volcanic rocks which have been metamorphosed in its southern part.¹

The cliffs in this guidebook fall within the Southern Province of the Canadian Shield. Therefore, some further information about the Southern Province is in order.

The Southern Province was formed initially from the sediments eroding off the rock of the Superior Province. The rocks formed from these sediments are mostly conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and greywacke. Later, 1.9 billion years ago, a collision of tectonic-plates created the Penokean Mountains along the southern edge of the Southern Province, north of today's Lake Huron. The ridges



32 *The description of the rock composition of the various cliffs in the Elliot Lake region is based on written sources. I'm no geologist, so I cannot actually identify the rock based on personal observation. Hopefully, at some point I hope I will be able to get rock samples identified by a proper geologist.

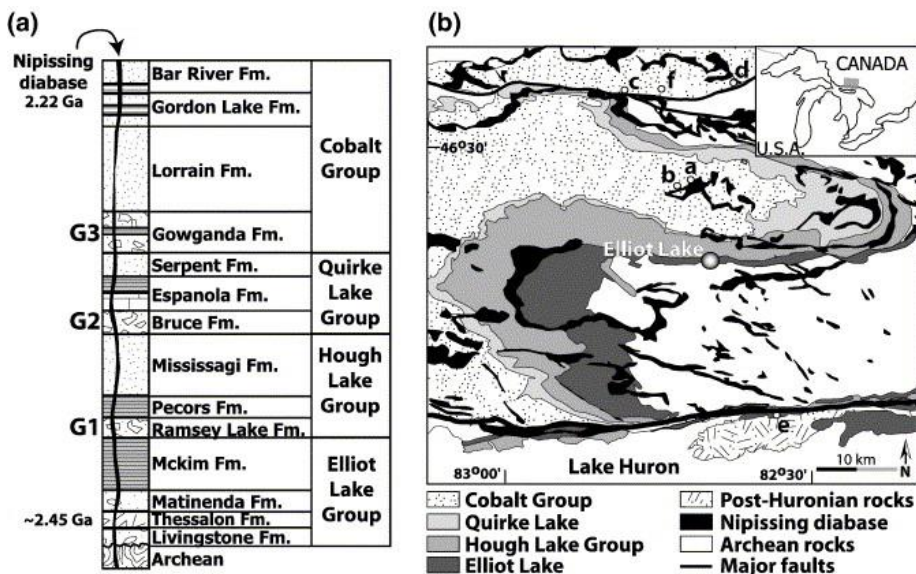


Diagram (a) shows the stratigraphy (layers) of rock in the Huronian Supergroup of the Southern Province of the Canadian Shield. The oldest rocks, Archean, are at the bottom; the youngest at the top. Ga stands for Giga Annum - 1 billion years ago.

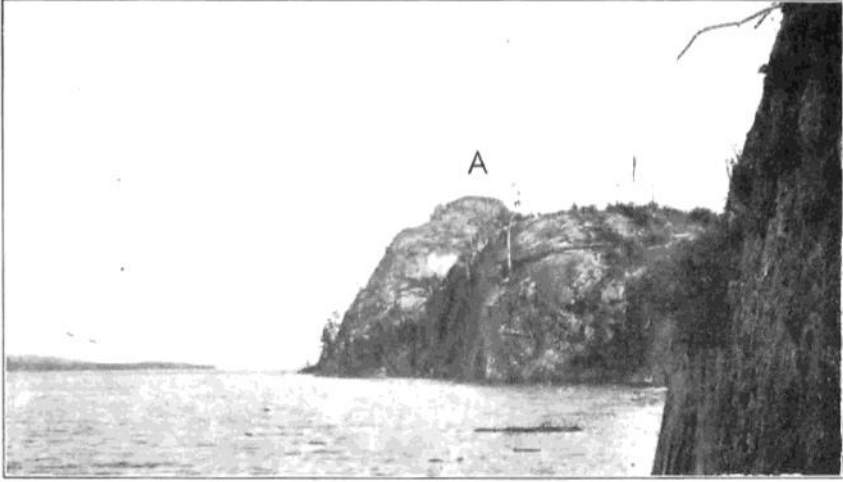
north of Manitoulin Island and the white quartzite La Cloche Mountains (of Killarney Provincial Park) are remnants of these mountains. During this tectonic collision, some of the rocks of the Southern Province underwent low-grade metamorphism (ex. sandstone becoming quartzite). About 1.1 billion years ago North America started to split apart (it didn't, in the end), forming the Midcontinental Rift. This deep valley of this rift was filled with lava (which formed igneous rocks) and sediments. Also, magma from below cut through the previously formed sedimentary layers, creating intrusions of igneous rock (the sills and dikes of the Nipissing Diabase). As a result, the Southern Province has quite a complex mix of various types of rock.

The Southern Province is divided into three areas or Supergroups. The rock around Elliot Lake and along the north shore of Lake Huron belongs to the Huronian Supergroup. The Huronian Supergroup is in turn divided into 4 Groups, which are subdivided even further into Formations. The diagram above shows the various layers/categories of the Huronian Supergroup.

All the rocks of the Huronian Supergroup are low grade metamorphic sedimentary rocks or igneous rocks.²

The bulk of the Huronian Supergroup consists of mostly metamorphosed sandstones and mudstones. Since there are no index fossils, the sedimentary rocks cannot be dated using fossils. However, the base contains volcanics that have been dated at about 2.480 billion years ago (Gya). The top of the Huronian and cross cutting all of the units within are the Nipissing sills which date to 2.2185 Gya. The age at which the Huronian sediments were deposited is between 2.480 Gya and 2.219 Gya.

¹ Ministry of Northern Development and Mines Ontario. **ROCK ONtario**. Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, ROCK ON Series 1, 1994, p. 27-28.



A. View eastward along Lauzon lake, Blind River area, showing a vertical dyke (A), of quartz diabase, which stands higher than the adjacent Mississagi quartzite, apparently as a result of pre-Glacial erosion. (Page 94.)

- A. View eastward along Lauzon lake, Blind River area, showing a vertical dyke (A), of quartz diabase, which stands higher than the adjacent Mississagi quartzite, apparently as a result of pre-Glacial erosion. (Page 94.)

[Collins, W.H., **North Shore of Lake Huron; Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 143**, 1925, p. 154]

