

The *Saint-Pierre* or *Fond d'Oury* slate mine (the name of a former forest division) also stands as testament to Haybes' rich slate-making past.

Chronology of the most important dates in the mine's history:

- **8/10/1837**, filing at the town hall of an application to operate a slate mine on the territory of the village of *Haybes* by Mr Jean-Jacques Jaumotte-Roffidal. He was the son of former Haybes notary Brice Jaumotte.
- The chosen location was on the banks of the Morhon stream at the hamlet of *Fontaine de Morhon*.
- **8/2/1838** and **1/8/1839**: two decisions by the village council accepting the request. Work had to begin within a year of the decision being approved by the higher authority.
- **3/9/1839**: favourable opinion from the sub-prefect of Rocroi
- **6/9/1839**: operating authorisation granted by the *Prefect of the Ardennes*
- **27/12/1840**: *King Louis Philippe's* decree validating the authorisations given by the village council to grant village land for slate quarrying.

The concession comprised:

- 5 hectares of subsurface
- 0.025 hectares of land to erect the barracks and dispose of the debris. As the site has to be cleared, the applicant shall be required to pay compensation to the village council, assessed on the basis of the age of the coppice, and the demarcation of the concession shall be at the expense of the operator.
- Authorisation to use water from *the Morhon* stream to operate a pump for mine drainage*. The water was channelled through a diversion canal starting upstream of the slate mine.



The «Fond d'Oury slate» mine around 1965
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* The word pumping refers to the action of evacuating or draining seepage water, particularly in mines, quarries or underground environments.

** The term "rendage" or «land rent» in the context of a slate mine generally refers to a royalty or share of the production payable to the owner of the land, in this case the village council. The «35 thousandth» means that the village receives a share of the production for every 35,000 slates extracted.

Concerning the rent to be paid to the village council:

Land rent** payable to the village council of every 35 thousandth slate for a period of 10 years, then after that time, payment of a land rent of every 30 thousandth slate.

In February 1853, Mr Jaumotte applied for a 10-hectare extension from the Count of Maldeghem, owner of the woodland adjoining that belonging to the village. There is no record of whether this request was accepted.

However, in the early 1870s, the village council authorised the extension of the slate mine's surface and subsurface by 0.075 hectares across village woodland.

The plan shows the existence of a second site, which began to be exploited in 1872, but which was apparently soon closed down.

The current entrance is not the original one and the gallery is partly an exploratory gallery, but was also created to facilitate the evacuation of the slate blocks towards the exit. The workings are located some fifty metres below.

It is estimated that the mine was closed at the end of the 19th century or the very beginning of the 20th century, nothing having been found in the archives to confirm this.



Fond d'Oury © Vincent Anciaux