ssue 1

$3.50

TAMARACK MAGAZINE

EXPLORATION OF VALLEY HISTORY

REFERENCE

Issue 1 $3.50

TAMARACK MAGAZINE

EXPLORATION OF VALLEY HISTORY

Staff

Jim Alburger
Eric Askey
Emily Doubt
Clint Goyette
Maija Gulens
Amy Kittmer
Tom Murphy
Eileen Murray
Barton Ostrom
Gillian Ramsey
Mariecke Reinders
Jeff Wilson
Mr. Bill Patterson

Features

Photographs on the cover and this page are of buildings on the farm of Mr. Allan Davidson of Eganville

Copies of TAMARACK may be purchased at various book and magazine outlets in the Valley or directly from Mackenzie High School, Box 397, Deep River, Ontario, K0J 1P0 – Cost is $3.50 + $.50 handling

Introduction

TAMARACK magazine, an oral history of the Ottawa Valley, is produced by students in the TAMARACK program at Mackenzie High School, Deep River, Ontario. It is written, typed, edited and laid out by 16 and 17 year olds who have never written for publication, never conducted a significant interview and never produced a magazine. Few of the students had talked seriously with an 80-100 year old, other than possibly their grandparents. This magazine is a tribute to these kids; it illustrates what young people can do if given the opportunity. A second issue is planned for the fall of 1991.

TAMARACK, started in February 1991 in Deep River (about 200 km west of Ottawa) is a "total immersion" program in which a group of grade 11 and 12 students are together as a group with one teacher for one complete semester. The group can operate within the school, or outside in the community without disrupting other school programs. A great deal of community support is involved. Kids work with scientists in their labs; local writers and others with special crafts and skills give workshops. Community people help supervise and arrange outings. Parents help with transportation and fund raising and teachers help with various aspects of the program. Emphasis is placed on environmental science, outdoor recreation and the study of the oral history of the Ottawa Valley. Students receive senior level credits in Environmental Science, Physical Education and English.

One of the major objectives of the TAMARACK program is to have students gain some appreciation of the oral history of the Ottawa Valley from the people who have lived their lives here. A second objective is to record this history while it is possible. Students tape interviews with the "old-timers", transcribe the interviews and prepare the articles that appear in this magazine. The tapes, transcriptions and articles will be part of a permanent collection.

The articles in this magazine are accounts of oral history as recalled and told by the people who lived it. Some of the memories have been modified with time and some of the stories have been embellished as they have been transferred from one generation to the next. This is what oral history really is. Thanks to all of our subjects for welcoming us into their homes and sharing their life with us.

The language and expressions in the stories reflect the rich heritage of the Valley people and have been retained as much as possible. Unfortunately, the written word cannot convey the accents and emotions of speech which are evident on the tape.

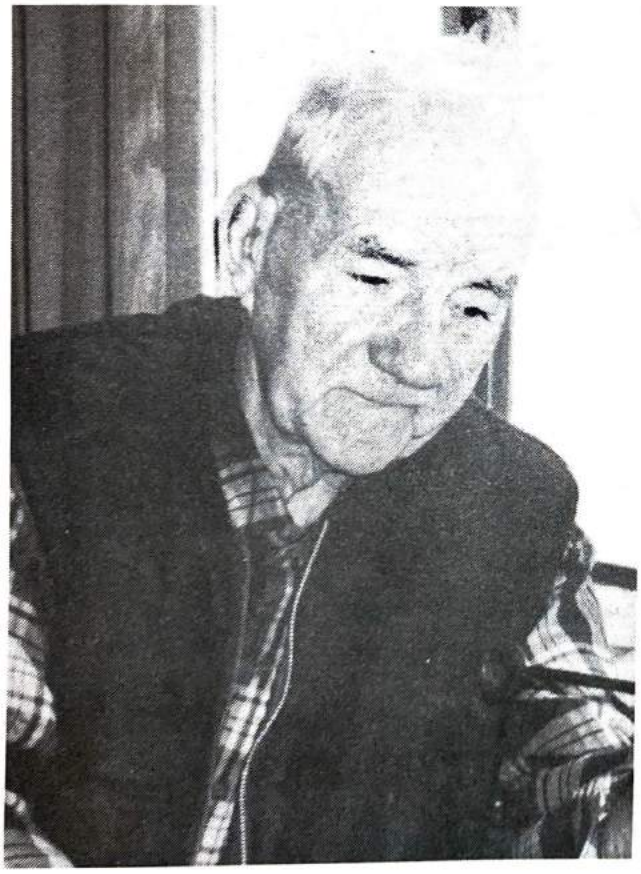
We hope that you enjoy the articles as much as we enjoyed preparing them. As one of the TAMARACK students commented while working on her article, "The more often I listen to the tape or read the article, the more I like him."

Bill Patterson
May 1991

"Every night there'd be a bunch 'round, sitting and talking."

We arrived at the Davidson farm near Eganville on a snowy day in February, filled with apprehension, but a gentle German Shepherd greeted us outside the porch and Mrs. Justina Davidson warmly welcomed us into her cosy kitchen.

To our left, a kettle whistled on top of a big white wood stove resting against one kitchen wall. In the corner on the counter between a microwave oven and a small television set, sat an electric toaster that looked many years older than either of us. Around the table on the opposite side of the room, each one of the wooden chairs had a face surrounded by other splendid decorations hand-carved into the back rest.



Mr. Allan Davidson

In a sturdy rocking chair in the near corner of the room sat eighty-nine year old Mr. Allan Davidson wearing a grin which immediately made our worries vanish. His white hair was tousled and his eyes twinkled as he watched us set up our recording equipment. Once the tapes started rolling, the interview was underway. Mr. Davidson began recounting stories of his life, meanwhile proudly displaying many historical artifacts including a stone from Blarney Castle from his Irish ancestry, a hand-carved bible box, a unique bear gun, and the original 1864 deeds for his farm.

We had known beforehand that Mr. Allan Davidson ran a Century Farm, but had no idea of the variety of work and diversity of other activities he had experienced. He has an incredible memory and could tell us the dates of every event. We were truly amazed at the wealth of knowledge we discovered during our visit with Mr. Davidson.

by Emily Doubt & Gillian Ramsey

"My grandfather came over from Ireland and he settled right here (Constant Creek Road) about twenty years before there was any claim for the land. They came up the Bonnechere, the Fourth Chute, and they came in on an old lumber road. They never paid for the land. They got a free grant. They just had to clear so many acres. They lived right up near the road, then Dan McCauley (a great bushman and timber cruiser) blazed out the Opeongo Trail right past their door. After that the surveyor came through and they (grand-

father and great uncle) had no trouble getting lots. Any new fellow coming in had to clear a certain number of acres. Many settlers came up the Opeongo after it was built and claimed all the land here, including some good farms up on the mountain. It (the Opeongo) was a lumber man's road; hundreds of teams would come up to the lumber camps at the headwaters of the Madawaska.

My grandfather often saw the Redcoats pass up the Monk Road. They went right through to Parry Sound. They built a stopping place just across the creek back there, about a mile from here, and that's where they stayed. It was an overnight place, just stay overnight and go again the next morning. For a long time you could find a lot of artifacts there. I used to plow up some stuff in the fields there, but not lately. I think the Indians got it, moved into it after.

I went to school right down the road here, in the little red school. Now they have made a hunt camp out of it. The school was called S.S. 6 Grattan. When I went there, there weren't too many kids, but after I went, there was a big bunch. There'd be about twelve when I went. There was just one class and the teacher taught everything. I never went to high school, though.

We stayed pretty quiet, me and my brother. We'd take to the bush on Sundays and Saturdays. When I was about eighteen or nineteen, we were big enough to go to the dances. There was a French settlement that had barn dances every Saturday night. Because we lived on the corner, people used to come from all over and sit and talk in the evenings. All of us used to come here. Every night there'd be a bunch 'round from up the mountains, sitting and talking, mostly about farming.

You got five dollars a day for a team, two men, and the machine, but you had to pay for your own repairs.

My father bought a threshing mill run by horse power. I threshed with it lots of times. You wheeled the mill to the neighbour's barn after they'd harvested their wheat. You would set up the horse power and thresh there all day. You got five dollars a day for a team, two men, and the machine, but you had to pay for your own repairs. You could thresh for about thirty people some places. There were straw carriers on the threshing mill, but they'd build stacks and tramp it in the shed to feed the oxen. They'd take their grain to their own grainery after it had been threshed. The barley and oats would be for the horses and cattle. The wheat, they'd take and get ground. Eganville was the closest to get the wheat ground into flour.

I used to walk to Eganville when I was young. It's 12 miles. My father and mother, they'd take the buggy and horse. My brothers and I used to

walk right through the bush. We never went on the road. Eganville was quite a big place. I guess around two thousand in it now, but at that time there would be maybe one thousand people around there. We used to take the wheat out and get it ground into flour in Eganville after they quit grinding flour in Dacre.

We always had salty pork here. I like the salty pork, I was brought up on salty pork. I always put away and have some every fall. Killed four pigs last fall and put some of it away. I killed our own beef all along, the best two year old steer always. Last fall, had the last one I had. Have to buy one from now on.

Around the turn of the century they made potash for money. They burnt all the maple for the ashes to be leached, to get the lye out of it. They'd take the lye and boil it till it got hard, just like maple sugar. They'd put the lye in the barn and then a cooper would make a bar from it. They'd take the bar to Renfrew and get thirty dollars, but it took a whole year to make.

We used to farm, trap, and hunt, me and my brothers. Most of the family were all hunters; my brothers, my mother and her brothers. When I was growing up, if I had seen a deer for three jumps, I could put a bullet in him, whether I had seen him running or standing. Shoot bears and wolves right in the orchard here every fall. Wolves are a hard thing to see; they travel at night so you can't see them in the daytime very often. My father used to shoot them with the lantern light, now I use a flashlight. They're no good, bears or wolves, I shoot all of them that I can see. They kill all the deer, young fawns in the spring. They just won't kill what they eat; they kill as long as the deer last. They kill for the fun of it.

Mr. Davidson with his unique bear gun

One of the earlier methods to kill the bears was to use a thing called a bear gun. It's a muzzle loader in which you put the powder and balls in it, and cock it by shoving the hammers back . You put the cap on the little tips, and you hang it in a tree. You put a fish head or a piece of meat on the hooks. The bear comes along and takes the piece of meat and pulls it out. That trips the mechanism as it opens his mouth, the bullets shoot in, and the two bullets go right down his mouth.

I also used to trap around Constant Creek, trapping mostly beaver and mink. Use just a foot trap, a beaver trap they called it - number four. You'd take the pelts to Renfrew and fellows there bought them. They'd take them to the game warden and get them stamped. Then they'd take them to North Bay and sell them up there. But you can't now, they quit, people quit using fur. Beaver furs were ten dollars, wouldn't pay you to catch 'em. I never cared too much for fishing. We have a trout stream that goes right through our farm here, but I hardly ever go look at it.

I've always liked dogs, and cats too. Have a purebred German Shepherd named Lady. We tried to keep hunting dogs for a year or two. A spaniel is one of the best deer dogs you can get. To train, in the summertime I'd take them with me,

---

... if I had seen a deer for three jumps, I could put a bullet in him, whether I had seen him running or standing.

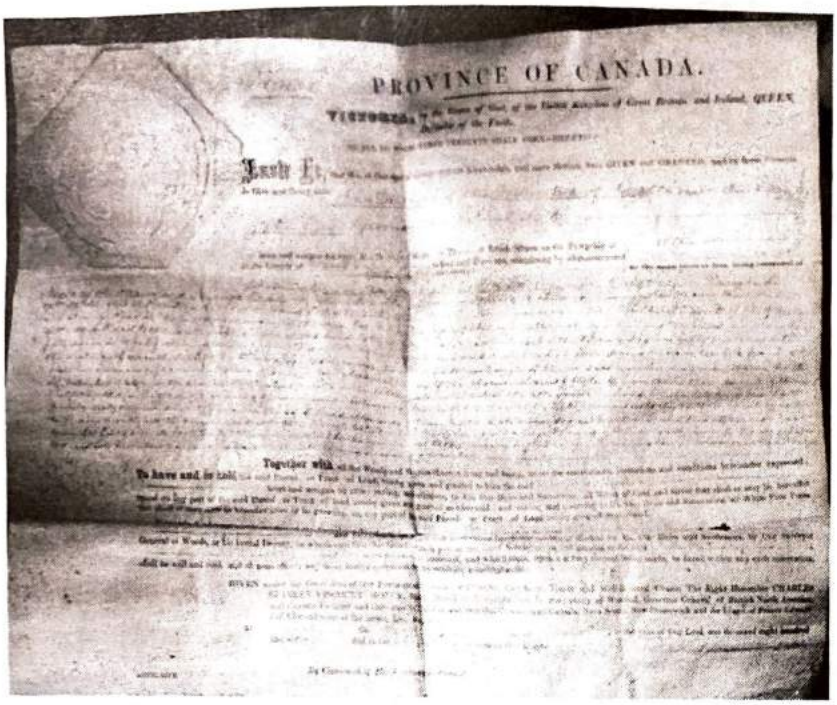
tie them, and shoot the deer then. Let them see the deer dead, they'd run the deer after that. I used to have hounds, but they're too hard to keep. They'd go in the bush all the time so I had to keep them tied. But a collie, if you're trying to run deer, will just go where you want it to. The cat I have right now was a wild cat and nobody else could get his hands on him but me. I tamed him last winter. I took some feed out. I tamed a coon too. The coon would come and eat out of my hand.

You paid fifteen dollars return trip to Winnipeg. From there on you paid half a cent a mile to wherever you wanted to go.

I went out west on the excursions (for the harvest). You paid fifteen dollars return trip to Winnipeg. From there on you paid half a cent a mile to wherever you wanted to go. If you didn't have the money, they'd give you a ticket anyway, to get you out of the city. There were forty coaches and there were no cushions on them, only slats. There was a stove in one end and a bunk you pulled down from above. I got on the train the first time I went, and it took over a week to get to Winnipeg. I never took any lunch because I thought the train was the same as any other train; you could get off at places and get a lunch. It was tough! Winnipeg was a nice place to be in the fall of the year, but kind of muddy. We'd go out and you stooked wheat, and when you finished, you started threshing. But then they had big steam threshing mills and four men throwing into them. You didn't come home on an excursion train. You took the regular train to come home 'cause there weren't enough people coming back at one time. You came back whenever you felt like it.

I was in the west in 1922, the year of the Haileybury fire. I come there the year after and I thought there was lots of work, and so there was. I worked on the courthouse and jail. It was me that put the stones up on the big clock. I wasn't the stone mason, but I put up a lot of the stones that the stone masons got too lazy to finish off with. It was all cut stone that they cut in the prison in Kingston and hauled to Haileybury.

When it got too cold, I went working on the power lines in about 1923 or 24, hooking up the power lines on big steel towers all over. We slept in tents all winter. We were good and warm; they kept a night fire man. There were no sleeping bags then, just blankets. There'd be about twenty men working right with me, but there were other gangs ahead - hundreds of men. They were cutting the brush and there was another bunch digging the holes to put the feet in. The big steel towers were about six by eight and there were four holes to each tower that had to be level. I was climbing on the wire gang, putting on insulators and wire. The other gangs went ahead; we were the last.



The original 1864 deed for Mr. Davidson's great uncle's land

In the Depression, there was enough to eat but there was no money. That's about the way it was, everybody was in the same boat; nobody was richer. You were better on the farm than you were in town at that time. There was always work. You grew potatoes and meat and you could get along all right. You could go out in the bush and trap, and the corn was always good and fresh.

I worked two winters in a lumber camp. I worked up at Whitney, and I worked on the McCauley bridge. I was cutting trails the first winter. They took the timber out mostly to the Four Chutes of the Bonnechere and they used to take drives right down to the mill to make them square logs and cut them into boards. But at first the square timber all went to England.

When I quit farming for a bit, I worked for years for the Department of Highways building roads, then I worked for some construction engineers. Worked for the head engineer on Bancroft, Department of Highways. Then, when I got too old to work, after sixty-five, I got a job as inspector for him. I've worked all over the Bancroft District. After I got hard of hearing, they put me on the job of checking the grade on the big ditch down here in Ross township. I checked the grade on the Peterborough Airport too.

I can find water with a stick. I went all over, finding water, I found four or five different flowing wells. I have had one down in the cellar for over twenty years, and it's flowing well. An artesian well they call it. Found the water at the Peterborough airport. They knew I could find water. Neighbour up here from Toronto, he bought an old farm up there, wanted to get water to drill a well. He's now got a flowing well on the hill there."

Mr. Davidson still lives on his farm and is an avid hunter. He continues making his own maple syrup and enjoys collecting and displaying many rare and treasured antiques.

"I've lived in Chalk River all my life. Yeah, and it's been a long one and a good one"

Ninety-four and still living on his own, Mr. Harry Leach resides in a house nearly as old as he is, in Chalk River. As soon as he opened the door to welcome us, we saw that his life was touched with the history of the Chalk River area. From the front hall which was covered with photos of family, friends and work, the slender man showed us to his "parlour". As we set up for the interview and chatted with Mr. Leach, we were awed with the remarkable room in which we were seated. The old house was full of character. The ornate carvings around the doors matched the cosy wallpaper in its own definite style. The warm colours and floral like design of the furniture only slightly dispel one's attention from the strong, durable , but aging material underneath. His television and the stereo simply did not belong here. Harry Leach however, was just the opposite. His relaxed air and comfortable pose gave us the feeling that he was as much part of this house as everything else. He sat on his sofa, his favourite seat, as he had probably done a thousand times before. Settling back comfortably he began to speak to us, sifting through his memories for the ones that put a smile on his creased and weathered lips.

by Mariecke Reinders and Clint Goyette

Mr. Leach

"My father came from Brockville and my mother came from Prescott. That's only 11 miles apart. My grandfather was a blacksmith, shoed horses and anything like that. My father loved his trade there as a blacksmith.

I would say my parents moved to Chalk River in 1885. My father was working in the Sault. That's where he earned his trade as a blacksmith. There was a man who worked in the locomotive shops (CPR) down here (Chalk River) by the name of Murray and he took sick. They had to get a blacksmith to take his place and the closest one was in Sault–Ste. Marie. So they sent for my father and he came down. He was here a week and Murray died and dad stayed here. Bob Murray died without a will. He had two boys and they were only children. They couldn't sell the house till they were 21. So we just rented the house.

I lived in Chalk River all my life. Yeah and it's been a long one and a good one. I was born in 1897. I lived over on Wilson Street.

I met my wife right here. Went to school with her. She was my girl practically all my life. I was married right in that corner of the room there. I was about 21. People didn't go to

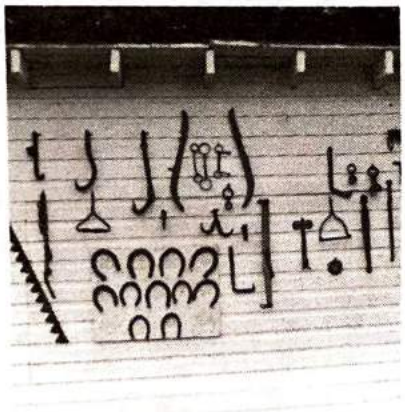
churches them days to get married. Not for quite a while after. I know about a girl that got married when she was only 16. That's too young. We should have been married before we were but her father said "You're too young to get married." We didn't give a darn then. I think we courted for at least six years before we were married. At least that much. If my wife had of lived another four months we would have been 68 years married. We had our little wee bits of ups and downs, but I guess everybody does. We were married at 5 o'clock at night. It was on the 7th of May, 1919. I had nothing to be nervous about. There were just twenty or thirty people there. No big times like now. No, a wedding wasn't very much then.

We had our little wee bits of ups and downs, but I guess everybody does.

We had eight children. The first little girl died, then five boys and twin girls.

We had lots of dances especially over at the Orange Hall. Only square dances. We didn't have dances like they have today. They don't have a square dance at all. No polka and some of those things. I'd like to do it, but heck, I'm too old to do it. That's (Orange Hall) where we used to have them. The first big hall we ever had here is that Lions Club Hall.

I went to school here. I guess I started about 1904. Grade eight was the senior fourth at that time. We didn't have grades, you see. We had junior first, senior first and so on. Called it "Little Red School", but it wasn't very little. We had two rooms and two teachers. Things are just the same I bet you in school as they were then. We couldn't go to school until we were seven, dead on, seven. Now they're going to school two years old or three years old. We had to go to school from eight in the morning to twelve, one o'clock to four. Now you see them going by here at three o'clock three thirty, all hours. Yeah, all hours.



A selection of tools from the early days of the Valley.

Chalk wasn't ever a farm place. There was the odd farm but they were far between. That was all bush out there in my time when I was a kid. Next door, the little store that's there now, was a big store at one time. The big one burnt down in 1962. There was another one up the street. That's all there was here, just two stores – general stores. Pretty near get anything you wanted in it. And we had a hotel, it's up there yet. Hotel hasn't changed any. Well it had a little addition put to it but otherwise it's not changed one bit. Tom Field had a boarding house and the first Post Office that was really in Chalk River. Then we had the second Post Office here after he quit there in 1910. My wife was the post master 35 years.

There was no Deep River then. It was all bush... and Indians. We have some descendants of them here. A couple of them come from Deep River. We had no Indians really living in Chalk River, they were all up around Deep River. I used to know them all, the biggest part of them. Oh heck, they were harmless. They were just like everybody else. There wasn't much change here until after the Plant (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., –A.E.C.L.) came. You would see strangers come into Chalk River and Deep River. That livened things up.

My first three years of working in the summertime was in Mattawa and Temiscaming. I was on the railroad. Our old station was built in 1910. I started to work on the CPR in

1913. Until 1915 I was a section man at Mattawa. I just worked there in the summertime, I would say from May till December. Worked in the shop in the winter. I used to come home every week-end cause I could just get on the train and that's all. I didn't have to pay anything, had a pass. I went back to the railroad shop and was in the office all the time. I spent all my life in the shop until 1962, I was retired. All there was here was the Railroad before the Plant came. The only work there was, was on the Railroad. There used to be lots of it in the winter. At night they'd have maybe twenty men out shovelling snow on the track. We had a shop down there that held fifteen engines. Sometimes we'd have thirty five smaller engines in here. Small little engines. There was no way of getting around, only the train. Station Street was the highway. It was a wagon road, that's all. We never had streets like this until the Plant (A.E.C.L.) came. We never had electricity until the Plant came, in 1945.

We bought our first car in 1920, a Maxwell. And it was a pretty nice car! It wasn't like the cars today. It had just canvas windows on it. You took them off and if you thought it was gonna rain or something then you put them back on again. And then we had the little tires. You had sixty-five pounds of air in them and they were as hard as bullets. Petawawa's only eleven miles away and it would take half a day to go there in your car, that's how the roads were. Instead of getting stuck in snow you'd get stuck in sand. You could go to Pembroke on the Plains. We used to call it the Plains between here and Petawawa. It was all sand. You went to Petawawa and you got stuck. And the more you burrowed the farther down you went. You might as well start right off and get out and push.

Chalk River Station - 1930's
(Courtesy of Harry Leach)

I have a boat even today. Out in the building out there. Outboard motor and canoe. The Ottawa River's quite a river. She's a bad one too. Rough, rough! Oh, I was across the river up on Mount Martin a good many times. I lost a lovely little Brownie box camera. I was up on top of the Oiseaux rock across the river. I was showing somebody something across the river. I said "Away over there!" [and pointed to show them] and the camera went with it. The strap broke off it and down she went. I went to Petawawa and Fort William quite often in the boat.

A.E.C.L. didn't affect me in any way, only I had a cottage on Sturgeon Lake. They bought me out. One hundred dollars, that's all they gave me. I wasn't the only one; there was about three or four of us, but anyway they told me that I could have the building if I wanted it. If not, they'd burn it. It was no good to them so I took the building. Sawed her down and brought it up in parts, and put it down on Cory Lake. I had a son that helped me. There wouldn't have been anything if it hadn't been for the A.E.C.L. That just spruced the place right up."

Mr. Leach, having lived his whole life in Chalk River, knows the small town very well. He's been through almost everything with Chalk River, and has made a good life for himself. It is easy to tell by the way he remembers his past, that his family and friends are very important to him. His love for life is apparent in his tales of the past. Unfortunately, we had only a short time to spend with him, listening to his stories of the past.

" I worked hard for a dollar a day..."

Easing back into the comfort of his well-worn chair he gazes towards the window, fond memories of the days gone by cloud his silvery-blue eyes. Seeing not the harsh turmoil of winter outside but envisioning scenes of his boyhood in that very yard, his friendly face glows with a warming smile. His weather- beaten skin and timeworn work clothes provide evidence of a long life of outdoor work as he sits recounting stories of life in lumber camps. Small in stature, yet with a hardy frame, he is a softspoken man of a modest nature who has an affinity for his seventeen year old feline companion.

The large red brick house he shares with his petite wife is tastefully decorated; carefully arranged furniture and knicknacks are a classic illustration of fine craftsmanship. The pale walls and aged piano host a variety of paintings and photographs, their images yellowed with time. Largely unchanged over the century the house is characterized by a faintly musty-sweet aroma and the faded colourings of its comfortable interior.

Greeted by a friendly smile and a welcoming handshake we begin our visit feeling at ease in his presence, and eager to learn more of Garnet Allan's story. Reminiscing about his early days in the lumbering era he takes us back in time to the traditional Valley way of life...

Garnet Allan

"I was born August 22nd, 1905, right here in this house. It will be a hundred years old this coming year. This was the first brick house in this area from Deep River to Chalk River and all around. There was the odd frame house around but not too many, they were mostly log houses. When my grandfather landed in this area, they came by canoe and they settled down at the river. The traffic was all by the river in the summertime, and the wintertime up the ice; there was no road. The original old road was used when the surveyors came in to survey the townships. This road that you came in on was named Allan Road, after my father, and McKinley Road down the highway was named after my grandfather.

As a kid I remember, if you had been sitting here then, you would have seen nothin' but horses pass. When I first went to school there were times that I couldn't get past them. There was a string of thirty or forty spread out along the road. There'd be the loads going west and the empties coming east. Right down here where the Stewart house is, across from the Department of Highways depot (west of Deep River), there were a lot of buildings where my grandfather ran what was called a stoppin' place. There were stablings to keep thirty-two teams of horses over night. 'Course the traffic then was all horses and everybody had blankets and slept on the floor.

Down by the township hall, just next to Bass Lake Road was where the old log school house was. There would have been twenty kids there at the most. If a pencil fell on the floor off the teachers desk it would roll to the back of the room 'cause the log foundation was beginning to rot. A couple of winters I had the job lightin' the fires in the wood stove at school. I'd leave here about seven in the mornin' and I'd walk down to light the fire and go and get two pails of water, wadin' through snow pretty near up to my waist sometimes. Yep, there's quite a difference now. Got home at about five, 'course you had to walk a mile and three quarters and what slowed you up was the horses. There were so many teams that you couldn't get by. You had to go the speed they were going.

Well, my grandfather and grandmother, they came from Ireland. He was a blacksmith; worked with horses. My grandfather owned about a thousand acres, all down here to the Byeways and all along the river. They farmed about four hundred acres.

At twelve years old my dad went to the bush early. He never went to school a day in his life but he was really good at doin' arithmetic. He'd be finished and have the answer before you could even finish readin' the question! Any high school work like that he learned himself. I passed my entrance but I would have had to go to Pembroke to go to high school.

As a rule, if a fella got cut we'd patch him up. Unless it was bad, then they'd take him out. My father, he'd stitch up cuts and fix 'em up good. He kind of made a study of it. He even pulled teeth. I still have some forceps that he'd use. The blacksmith had a clamp with a chain on it, almost like them.

Garnet Allan's home: the first brick house in the Upper Ottawa Valley

They'd put the clamp on and then knock the tooth out, and boy that hurt! But at least my dad had a hypodermic needle that he'd inject in the poor guy.

My family had five sisters in the house, that's how I got abused! We got along of course; you had your work to do and that kept you out of trouble. We had our own horses, pigs- we had beef, hens, and ducks; we raised everything we ate. Supplies for the winter you'd order during the fall, and they'd bring them up on a boat that was run from Pembroke. In those times you didn't buy a few cans, you bought the whole case. Outside of flour or sugar, you raised everything. To give you an idea of how people lived, we had what you called a root house. It was built out of cedar logs with a roof on it and the whole thing was covered in sand. There were even little trees growing on it, but inside it was dark and cool so the meat, poultry, and vegetables kept all winter.

There weren't very many games. We often cleaned off a piece of ice and skated a little, but I'll tell you, the skates weren't like they are today. You strapped them onto moccasins or whatever type of boots you had. You'd just get going and one would fly off! We used to try to keep a rink open in a bay where it froze before it got too much snow on it. We had an outfit with the horses rigged to put water on. It wasn't very big but it was all that we could afford to do. Yeah, we skated, snowshoed, went sliding, and pretty near every kid could play Euchre.

In summer we played ball, but I wouldn't say it was according to the rules! Pretty early in the summer, as soon as our work was done at night, we were in the water. We'd race down the length of the wharf and jump off to see who could get in first. In those days, during the log boom, the river was full

of hundreds of thousands of logs. On a fair day they'd send ten tows up the river and the tugboats would pick them up. If there was a tow of logs close to the shore we'd be out on it seeing how far we could run without fallin' in. As young lads that was great sport for us. I don't think I had any skin on my shins till I was about fifteen! Time seemed to go pretty fast. You went to school and you had chores to do every night, then your homework.

Dating wasn't too easy then because it was difficult to travel and there weren't many girls around then, but I did have a steady once in a while. There weren't any halls around so the dances we had were in houses. Also every year there were church picnics in Deep River, Chalk River, and up at Swisha, and there were dances after those too. We also had night excursions on passenger boats that ran from Pembroke to Swisha stopping at Oiseaux Rock. The trips were nice because they ran when there was a full moon, and there would be dancing out on deck.

Didn't have any kids, nothin' but the fence around the yard.

I met my wife in the Pembroke hospital where she had worked as a nurse for many years. We were married in forty five and that's a long time with a woman. Didn't have any kids, nothin' but the fence around the yard.

My first paying job was lightin' the fire down in the school, and I got five dollars for the year. I ended up doing electrical and plumbing work, but bush work was my calling. I worked twenty years with one company, then I quit and went off on my own. I started off with carpentry work and plumbing, then electrical.

When I began timber cruisin' I didn't work for much because I started off with my father. Timber cruisin' you were estimating the amount of timber in a certain area of the woods. The company you worked for had to know how many logging camps to put in for the winter and you had to see if the company kept their lines cleaned out. You had to keep movin' as you travelled the country, sleepin' in a tent. I don't think I'd like to try it now!

Camp life was a lot of work. You didn't see the camp too often 'cause you were up in the mornin' in daylight and you got in after dark. The sleep camps would have two whole rows of bunks. You got your quota of blankets, but there were no mattresses, I'll tell you that. Some camps weren't too hot. The grub wasn't too good- you got beans and pork, bread, tea, but you never saw coffee, not till the later years.

Well I'll tell you, they worked. The fellas that made the logs had a number that they

Fraser's Landing on the Ottawa River, west of Deep River in 1913. (Photo – courtesy of Garnet Allan)

had to have every day. Some days they made more than that number; we used to call that the bank. You held that over so if you got a rainy day you didn't have to work and you still got your pay. Top wages for a log maker in those days would have been between twenty one and twenty six dollars a month.

Fraser's Landing was a lumber camp, just down the river. It was a clump of four houses, stables, old man Fraser's clubhouse, and an office. One of the houses is still there. I worked around there for a while, sometimes in the bush, and I renovated a whole building from head to foot. Ernie Mielke and I bought that place a while ago, but then someone else bought it and it burned down. When I was a kid I worked for the lumber company that was there, in the handyman's shop. Off and on I worked as a chef whenever it was necessary. Was I good? Well, not too many have died that I know of!

In this house everyone in the family had to take their turn to do the cooking and the dishes too. At home my mother was the top cook, but I was a cook at the camp.

"And a good one too!" declares Mrs. Allan, "Must put in a good word for him!"

In the olden days I usually got stuck cooking baked beans

... and I'll tell ya there was a noisy time around the country that night!

in the sand at picnics. At the 1967 centennial picnic I had to bake fourteen pots of beans, and I'll tell ya there was a noisy time around the country that night!

During the Depression I worked hard for a dollar a day in those times, and they weren't short hours either. We had breakfast at five o'clock and worked till supper at six. But here we didn't have many hardships. My dad was never without a job.

I've seen a lot of changes in this country. The highway was an advancement. I remember the first car that passed by on this road out in front, an old Model A Ford touring car. The sand road with wagon tracks up past Rolphton upset the car and killed the poor lad. Every summer a man from Ottawa came and left his car here while he was across the river. It was a Buick two door sedan and you pretty near needed a stepladder to get into it. Then of course I rode it around the yard when he was away!

I shot my first moose when I was eleven years old. I've hunted since I was able to swing a gun. In the Depression I trapped for ten days and when I came home I had earned seven hundred dollars: that was something. In those days we didn't waste anything. If the neighbours got a deer, they'd clean it up and divide it up amongst the neighbours.

I had to kick a bear out of my porch here one time. Slammed him with the outside door. I finally had to shoot him. I didn't want to, but he was bound to take over. But I was more of a conservationist than a hunter, I would rather see the animals up and around.

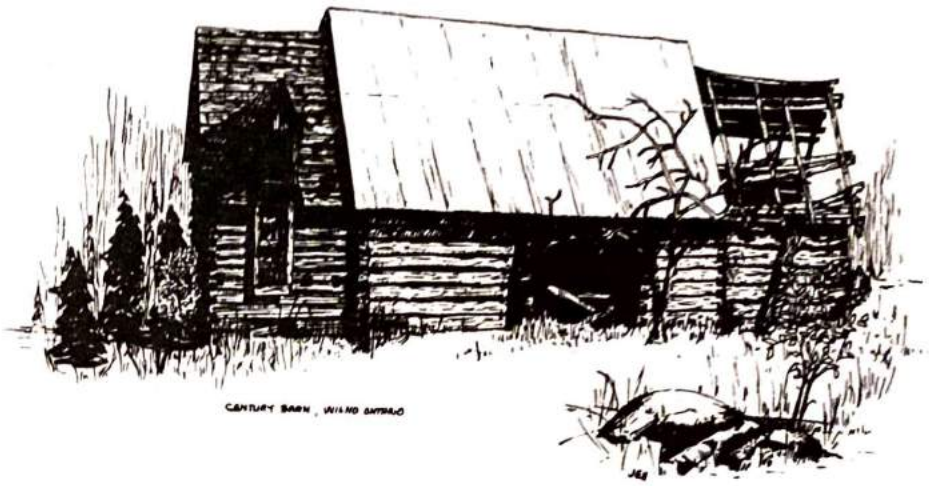
I had to kick a bear out of my porch here one time.

A lot of animals around here. I had a trout pond out back. Otters come along, minks, muskrats, had a pet groundhog for a few years, and a partridge too. They'd come into the yard and I'd feed them. I had a moose too but he got too big and I guess somebody shot him. He used to come every mornin' and stick his nose on the window. If he didn't come, I'd take my horn and give a few grunts and he'd come right away and stick his whole head in the window!

Across the river there was a bear that would come and tease my dog. That was the funniest thing to see, the dog would chase it up this tree that

had a big limb on it where the bear would sit, its four legs hangin' down. When the dog would leave 'cause he got tired of barkin' the bear would come down and get the poor dog all excited again!"

Garnet Allan has always been and remains a respected member of the Valley due to his life of hard work and wealth of information. Although it seemed a short time we spent with Mr. Allan, we savoured an entire lifetime of memories.



By Maija Gulens and Eric Askey

An Extra Spirit for Living

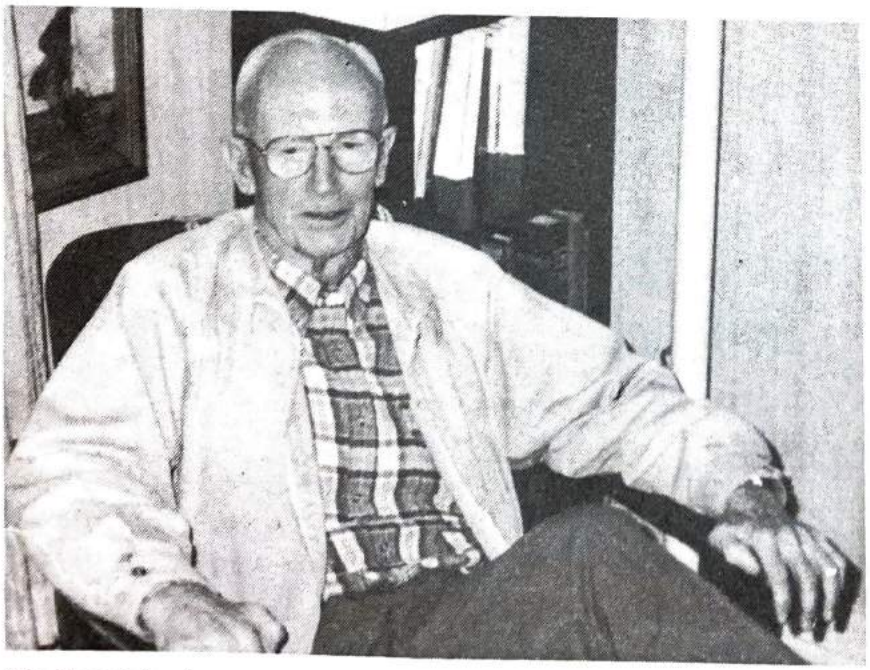
Backed by a tidy bookshelf and intriguing Arctic scenes that add life to the softly coloured room, Hugh Carmichael sits thoughtfully in a well worn maroon chair. He recounts tales of his life, with his comfortable smile, lilting accent, and his eyes sparkling from behind his glasses. He explains his love for hunting, fishing, carpentry, and the Yacht Club. He tells what it was like to grow up in Scotland as the son of a parish minister in Reay and then to move to Deep River in 1945.

In his off-hand manner, he describes his work and accomplishments in Scotland, Chalk River, and around the world. He was educated at the Universities of Edinburgh and Cambridge and studied under Professor Barkla and Lord Rutherford. He worked with many famous scientists all over the world. Mementos of his many expeditions, such as walrus tusks, a rattler and Hawaiian statue, can be found all over the house, but mostly in the loft that he built himself. Like the rest of his house, the loft contains wonderfully large windows that expose the exquisite beauty of the river and hills. Mr. Carmichael, now retired from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, lives in Deep River. Sitting back and relaxing, he fondly tells us the stories of his life.

Amy Kittmer and Barton Ostrom

"I was born in the year 1906, in the county of Sutherland in the north of Scotland. When I was three, I moved from there to the county of Caithness. My father was a minister of the Church of Scotland and the parish that he moved into for 35 years was called Reay.

I liked things like soccer and football, but my early childhood and teenage years were very active helping with the housework, the garden, and the Glebe. My father, like every minister of the Church of Scotland, had an area of land called the Glebe. He had the right to any game on his sixty acres, and having four boys who were all keen on hunting, this Glebe was very extensively hunted.



Mr. Carmichael

At the University of Edinburgh I got a Bachelor of Science Degree with first class honours in Physics. Then I decided to go to Cambridge University where Lord Rutherford wouldn't accept people unless they had proven their ability. So I spent most of my time developing an elec-

trometer, so sensitive that it would detect even individual Alpha Particles. This enabled me to go to Cambridge.

I indicated to Rutherford that I wanted to work on cosmic radiation. My work on cosmic radiation bursts was quite successful and I wrote a paper which was accepted by the Royal Society of London. I got my Ph.D, and two days later I was elected into a fellowship at St. John's College in Cambridge.

I carried on with my cosmic ray work but quite soon I got an invitation to join an expedition to the Arctic to do an experiment on a ship that was going to go into Baffin Bay to get as far north as it could. I suggested that we try to measure cosmic rays at as great a height as we could attain, using balloons filled with hydrogen.

I went on this expedition, from June till September in 1937. The ship was a Norwegian vessel used for hunting seals, constructed of wood with copper sheathing in front so that it could penetrate pack ice. It took 14 days to cross the Atlantic and we first touched land at Disko Island, half-way up the coast of Greenland in Baffin Bay. On the way up the coast of Greenland we had successful flights with the ionization chamber apparatus that recorded the intensity of cosmic rays. The measurement of cosmic radiation of our most successful flight was actually not confirmed for a further twenty years, in 1957–The International Geophysical Year.

At our farthest north, at Bache Peninsula in Ellesmere Island, three or four walruses were sitting on a very, very small ice pan. We were in a white boat with oars which were in loops of rope so that you could use them very quietly. The water was as still as anything because there was pack ice all around. When we got to a little less than about 100 yards from the walruses, the captain said "Skoot" which means shoot. I was very lucky because one of the walruses just raised up his head and I got an excellent sight. You had to shoot them right through the brain or else you wouldn't get them. I pulled the trigger, and he just collapsed.

On our way south at Devon Island, we visited a place where Dr. Frederick Cook (an explorer who claimed to have reached the pole) was supposed to have stayed the winter. We excavated the Eskimo house where he and his two Eskimo companions had stayed and dug up relics that only he could have dropped there. We also found the skeletons of twelve musk-oxen that he'd been eating, just as he reported. Everything fitted in very nicely. It's all written up in an account that was published by the Royal Geographical Society.

We then sailed south past Lancaster Sound and we were the first to map all those six fiords which were each about fifty, sixty miles long. It was quite a job!

Norwegian crewmen hauling in a walrus.

The Arctic was just a wonderful place. The colouring is indescribable, just amazingly beautiful.

The Arctic was just a wonderful place. The colouring is indescribable, just amazingly beautiful. In Baffin Bay, especially if there's some pack ice, the sea often looks a marvellous yellow colour and the icebergs have all kinds of colours in them. But I never got back there, I wish I had.

Hugh Carmichael (left) and Sir John Cockcroft (right) at Centre Lake in 1946

I came over to Canada about a year before the end of the war because Sir John Cockcroft was looking for physicists and other scientists who could come to Canada and do development work and research in Nuclear Physics. I was brought over here to design and build the instruments that would measure the ionization inside a nuclear reactor. These ion chambers were copied in Great Britain and other places. While I was here at Atomic Energy of Canada (A.E.C.L.), I used Quartz fibre to construct a very sensitive microbalance which would detect 100,000,000ths of a gram. I became Head of the General Physics Branch until I finally retired at age 65, mandatory retirement.

I came to Deep River in 1945, and it was all sand, no green turf anywhere. There was a guard-post at the highway where you came in and it was run by the companies who were here. This house that I'm talking to you in, was built in 1945 and used to be the house that was used by the Chief Medical Officer of the plant. It was a company town until they decided to change it to a development district. It was that for three years, with three people appointed as a committee to run it and then it finally obtained status as a corporation in 1958.

They were bringing in the wartime houses all the time. The houses would come in two halves which were set up and joined together. There were wartime fours and wartime sixes and that's the number of rooms in them. They would lay down a foundation of cedar logs and set the house on that and nail it together. Much later they went around the town and raised all these houses and put cement basements in below them. Many of them are still here, these original houses.

I used to get driven into the plant by the American Liaison Officer who was very fond of fishing and hunting. I lived without a car for several years here. There were the buses of course, which we all went in by. Some of the more important people had use of company cars, like Sir John Cockcroft and others. I lived very close to Sir John and knew him and his family very well

because I had known him for about eleven years before I came out to Canada. His successor Dr. W.B. Lewis and I worked in the same room in the Cavendish Laboratory when I went to Cambridge and I had known him for eleven years before, as well.

Deep River was a wonderful place to be during the early years...

Deep River was a wonderful place to be during the early years when it was a company town inhabited by very interesting people. I became interested in things like hunting and fishing, and I could be friendly with other people who had the same interests. This was a very good place for that kind of thing.

Hunting here has changed enormously, all for the worse. When we came there were very few people here, and now the whole place is covered with houses. Also, there are more people here who want to fish and hunt in what used to be the good places, so that the hunting and the fishing are not like they used to be.

I hunted snowshoe rabbits, partridge, grouse, ducks, and white tailed deer. The deer were very numerous. In snow, it was almost like going into a field where lots of sheep had been because the tracks were all over the place. I'm a member of a hunt camp for deer which can be visited at any time of the year, but the main time for deer is usually the first two weeks of November every year. There are ten members in this club, and we live there during the season. The deer are not so plentiful as they used to be. You were allowed one deer each. We used to be able to get that in the early days, but now we seldom get near that number. Perhaps none.

I met my wife in Edinburgh when I was doing research there and she was attending university. When we came over to Canada we had three children and our fourth child was born in Canada. Over here her main interest was in acting. She acted in about twenty different plays in town and she also directed and produced plays. At that time the town was inhabited by lots of people from Britain and the Continent and many of these people were very keen on acting.

I love listening to music but I'm not a performer myself. I was so frustrated by not being able to sing in Scotland before coming here, because my brothers would shut me up as soon as I started, that I joined the choral group and I actually sang in the chorus of "Iolanthe" and other Gilbert and Sullivan productions ending with "The Mikado". My voice was loud but apt to go out of tune and pull the whole chorus out of key.

It was quite exciting to see the Des Joachims dam being built; you could get conducted around the whole thing on a sort of tour. My wife, and kids, and I used to go up, sometimes with other people, just to see what was going on. Also, before the dam was started we used to go up to Des Joachims, what they call the Swisha, because the site of the rapids there was something to see. A bridge went over the rapids, but they're very dangerous rapids and lots of loggers' lives had been lost trying to run the rapids, in boats or canoes. Huge standing waves.

Hugh holding the antlers of a Scottish red deer

Deep River had sailing activities and I was an active member of the Yacht Club all of the time I was here. There were people here who were very keen on canoeing and yachting and some of them already had small yachts. Very early on they organized a yacht building program in which eight "Y-Flyer" sail boats were constructed. The "Y-Flyer" was designed by an American school teacher called Mr. Youngquist and it could be built of wood, like spruce, or even teak if you wanted to. The skin of the boat was constructed of sheets of plywood glued with marine glue. There were yacht races on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting about six o'clock and there were also competitions on the weekends. Parties (sailors) went to the Britannica Yacht Club, near Ottawa, the Kingston Yacht Club, yacht clubs near Montreal, and others, to compete. This was very, very interesting and I was very keen on it. I twice won the Canadian Championship and also one year I won the North American Championship in yachting, in the "Y-Flyer".

... one year I won the North American Championship in yachting, in the "Y-Flyer"

Companies like Frazer Brace and their people were here and were accustomed to living in outlandish places and organizing amusements. They would have gatherings on the beach in the evening. There would be singing and stuff to eat and everybody would come and people would sit around. There were also water sports like canoe races and other kinds of races. There was one game where people hit each other with some sort of harmless bag, while sitting on a horizontal greasy pole. (This continued until one fell off.) Some of the men in these companies were excellent singers and they used to lead the singing of all kinds of well known tunes. There was all sorts of amusing stuff, but they don't do that any more now.

The Ottawa Valley is a nice place to live except that it is getting overpopulated. I liked it better when it was empty. Yes, I don't really see why countries have to have the growth that they talk about all the time. Why not just let things be as they are. The great trouble in this world for the future is the enormous growth of populations everywhere. That should be controlled. It's already causing terrible, terrible trouble - serious trouble."

With his love of the out-of-doors, fishing, and hunting, Hugh Carmichael has fit in well with this small community. His experiences as a world-wide traveller and scientist, his exceptional skill and enthusiasm in the Yacht Club, his involvement with the Deep River Players' Club and more, have contributed so much to the Valley that has been his home for the past 46 years.

Mr. Carmichael steering the "Y-Flyer" off the Deep River waterfront.

"Chasin' cattle in the morning to chasin' them in evenin', that was my hobby"

The first thing we noticed as we drove along the highway was the mint green home that we had driven by so many times. We nervously approached the door and were met by a friendly face full of character belonging to Mrs. Stewart. As Mr. Stewart greeted us and shook our hands we were struck by the size of his well worked hands, and his short but strong figure. His welcoming face showed that he had no regrets from all the years he had lived. We entered the front porch and were seated around the kitchen table. Above the door hung a prayer. In the midst of all the modern technology we could see a memory of days gone by in the shape of an old wooden radio. Inside the house were all the comforts of modern day living, but outside were the tools of yesteryear. This was all in this house in which he's lived for thirty years.

by Eileen Murray and Tom Murphy

"Well, I was born in Chalk River really. That was back in 1920. Then we moved up onto the farm a year or so later, and I lived the rest of my life here on the farm. I have farmed for many years. I didn't start to help with the farm till I was about ten years old. That sounds right. When I was ten I started to help my grandfather milk cows. He was quite an old man. I lost my dad when I was eight years old. We stayed at my grandfather's and lived with him. I helped him farm and milk cows and I drove horses. It was alright, but like I say it was all work and no play. My grandfather was a bit handicapped, my grandmother and I had to plow. We had fourteen head of cattle. Then we had to separate the milk by hand and sell the cream. That was your living in them days, on the farm. It was four dollars or five dollars a paycheck (for the cream) you'd get once a month. That's how little it was. So you had to pretty well provide for yourself."

As Carson grew up he had to go to school, as most kids do.

"I started school when I was six years old. Them days you couldn't go till you were six. Just a little public school we had up here about two miles away, down the road at the gas station, you know DuManoir's just off Bass Lake Road. Well that was our old school. It was a one room school house, with thirty five children in different grades. One big wooden room with a big wood box stove in the centre to heat it. You had your turn to carry the water

Carson Stewart

from the spring every day. Had to walk to school in them days, there was no roads plowed or anything. You'd just hoof 'er through the snow. There was no high schools or nothing around here them days. When I was sixteen I wrote my entrance. What did they call that in those days? Senior fourth grade I guess? I had to go to Pembroke, to the Collegiate in them days."

According to his wife,

"That was the Pembroke high school. If you wanted to go to high school then, you had to go live there, because there was no buses or nothin' on the road."

"Did I like it? Not too well. I had to come home in the evenings and work on the farm. They were long evenings. Especially summertime when we were haying and that, gosh, it was long evenings. You worked till dark and you always had plenty of homework in those days. I had a step-father after my mother got re-married. He moved up here as a school teacher and he delighted in giving you a pile of work at night."

Not only did work include school work but work on the farm as well.

"In summertime you had the calves to feed, then you had the pigs to feed and the hens to feed. You had to carry water from the well. That was a job every evening too. There was lots to do, kept you busy. I learned to plow on the fields with horses when I was ten years old. I had to walk the plow. My grandfather died when I was seventeen so then I quit school and went to work on the farm. Then I had to take over the 100 acre farm. I worked for my grandmother on the farm, my mother did as well. My grandmother died when I was eighteen so then I worked the farm by myself. Then my mother remarried, and moved out, so I lived on the farm by myself. I got married in '39. My wife and I, we farmed for a number of years, then I quit. My wife took care of the farm while I was at the logging camps. We had pretty well got rid of all our cattle at that time. We used to have, at one time, two teams of horses, 'bout thirty head of cattle and a hundred sheep. Fourteen of them were milking cows. Chasin' cattle in the morning to chasin' them in the evening that was my hobby. We used to cut all our own hay for our cattle, supply our own feed for our cattle and horses, eh? The feed was grain and hay. That was in the early days when we were farming back before '39. The neighbours used to help one another. Especially summertime when you were haying and that, eh? Summer was a busy time of the year 'cause in haying time you worked daylight till dark. Daylight up milkin' the cows till eight o'clock or so; then you were into the haying and you worked at that until dark. The people were really helpful. Used to take more than one to operate the hayin' operation. You'd go and help a neighbour when it was a good day for him then he'd help you. Then in the fall of the year you had the grain to thresh and that was a big episode. That was quite a deal with everybody helping."

Oh, in the younger days it was a good life.

The other main industry in the Ottawa Valley in which Carson was involved was lumbering.

"Oh, in the younger days it was a good life. Long hours 'specially in the winter months when they were hauling logs. I mean, you worked anywhere from five o'clock in the morning till eight or nine o'clock at night. Three meals a day. Good food, that's one thing there was, good food. By the time you had breakfast and got to work, it was six o'clock. In the wintertime when you're hauling logs, there were long hours, hard work. We hauled them down

the mountain with trucks. Two sets of sleighs behind the truck; I drove a truck. That was 1940, and they drew logs out with the horses so far and then we'd bring them out on the ice. We hauled logs across the river from Deep River. I used to plow right across the river with a big V-plow on the front of my truck. There was no town of Deep River there at that time. We used to work six days a week for thirty dollars a month. That was the pay."

In order to haul the logs trucks were a necessity. Carson was very interested in them.

"I got trucking on my own in '44. I did quite a bit of trucking on my own. I worked for Ontario Hydro for five years when they were building the dam. Yeah, I had a truck there, I had two trucks there that were mine. I was gettin' into trucking pretty good; I had two trucks there for about five years. I worked in the bar rooms at night too when I was truckin'. I worked there for eleven years. I bartended up at Byeways, the Diplomat and the Chalk River Hotel. There in the evenings and Hydro in the daytime. So then I moved to Foundation Company down at the Plant (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.–A.E.C.L.). Foundation was a construction company, and we built building 150 at A.E.C.L. Worked down there for about four years and a half, truckin' as well. From that I pretty well carried on the trucking."

The Depression and World War II had an impact on people in the Valley.

"The war affected us quite a bit really. It took all the young people away pretty well. The Government conscripted them. Men were called and that was it, you had to go. Anyone who wasn't married or anyone who had nothing to hold him back was conscripted. I was at the right age to go in the army, but I was on the farm at that time and they sent me a form to fill in. I filled it in and had to have a Justice of the Peace sign it. I never heard anything about it. A lot of my friends went from around here; some of them didn't come back.

Depression was back in the thirties. But really we were on the farm and my Grandfather was a great provider. I mean it didn't affect us that much really. We never had a hell of a lot even out of the Depression. We raised all our own vegetables and we had everything of our own. Well we bought sugar and flour, and salt, you know, a few things. They used to buy sugar by the bags, store it away in the fall. We used to cut pulp wood and trade it with Dover's store in Chalk River for supplies. You go down with horses and wagon and bring home a load of supplies. That, would last you all winter.

Transportation was mostly all by horses. You had a driving horse and you'd hitch him to the buggy in the summer and you'd go wherever you had to go to shop or whatever. In the wintertime, it was a cutter. No buses in them days. It was all horses in my young days. I remember years when my uncle John was lumbering back here at Bass Lake. If you had to go to Pembroke he had a team of driving horses take you to Pembroke, if anybody's sick or anything. His sister in law drove the horses, took you to Pembroke. By cutter in the wintertime and by express buggy in the summer. Take about five hours to get to Pembroke. It took about two hours with the first cars.

Carson working on his horse drawn wagon (1991)

Had to go to Chalk River for groceries, or Pembroke really. There was no grocery stores from here to Chalk River, that was the closest general store. Everybody used to go there to get their groceries. But you only went once a month or so, you know. It made quite a difference when they opened up the highway. It used to be a little narrow road at one time. After we moved from Chalk River I remember it was only a small little wagon trail; big snow drifts coming over. You could see the horses coming up, they used to portage feed and that from down by Chapeau. Up to the Dumoine back up by Swisha. They used to portage up there with horses up the snow banks. Yeah, it was quite a thing. I remember when they plowed the highway the first year, they plowed it with horses. They just made a plow out of timber, and plowed it with horses. That was my first remembering of any snow plow. They got into it with some equipment after they widened it out. That's about the third time I recall it's been widened out. There were no homes from here to Deep River. There was only Walker's big house. There were no gas stations, there was nothing in them days,

Yeah we have a sugar bush here. Bob Wiley makes syrup here in the spring of the year. We did for a number of years ourselves but it got to be so much work involved in it, you know, luggin' the pails around I gave it up and Bob insisted he'd take over, so he takes over. We used to make about thirty gallons of syrup. That takes a lot of sap. So anyway you give it all away. You give some to this person and some to that person. Finally you end up with a gallon or so for your own. This way Bob makes the syrup and he gives me two gallons and I don't have to do any work.

I have a sawmill. Yes, a small sawmill. Well I got into that about fifteen years ago. Oh, I guess it was more than that really. I built a small one, a little portable outfit on a truck frame. It didn't prove out and I sold it and built a larger one which is still operating."

Since his retirement Carson has bought a horse and has fixed up a cutter and a wagon. Travel west of Deep River along Highway 17, and once again you may see a horse drawing a load — a reminder of yesterday.

"...During the war, things were mixed up a bit."

More often than not when you hear people talk about the war, in particular World War I and World War II, it is usually told from the viewpoint of the soldiers or you are told of the conditions endured within Europe. Well, we would like to give to you a different perspective upon that period of strife. A view told from the front, the home front that is, in particular, the Ottawa Valley. The following article is taken from an interview with Duncan McLaren.

Duncan McLaren is some eighty years old and now lives in Renfrew, Ontario. Some of you may remember Duncan as the chairman of the Cobden-Eganville School Board for some five years in the late 50's and who was responsible for the construction of the Opeongo High School. He is one of those people with a sense of community who likes to make you feel right at home. His sense of humour accompanied by his unique laugh and his colourful voice puts you at ease and keeps you interested in whatever he has to say. This makes him a pleasure to interview.

Duncan was a prosperous farmer in Bromley Township southwest of Cobden, and is able to give us a vivid account of life in rural Ottawa Valley through the years 1914-1945. So, please read on, as he describes to you the good times and the hard times.

by Jeff Wilson and Jim Alburger

Duncan McLaren

"I went to school during the first war and things were mixed up a bit; it wasn't like normal. That's the day when they had the strap! The good old days! There was a man teacher when I went, and he'd put the strap to you too. I even got it once. The neighbour's chickens come in there, and as young lads we were throwing food, and the chickens would run and pick it up and what not. Then we started picking stones up, and then we broke one's leg. Well, what did we do? We wrung its neck and took it away down and threw it at the other end of the school yard. And there if the girls didn't go tell on us! I got a good strapping, and then the lady said she didn't know whether it was her chickens or not. But we had a teacher there that took throwing stones seriously. Any other teacher wouldn't have taken that so serious. The chickens had no business being there anyway! I think the teachers were pretty thorough y'know. They weren't as well educated as they are today, but they were pretty thorough.

There was no combines, no modern machinery in them days. Great big old threshing mill that took a lot of men to run it along with the young lads. I was a young teenager then and they wanted me to run the bagger. In came a fellah from the government and he never even looked at me. He just put his hand in the bag, took some grain out and started blowing on it. He called my father over and he said "Now Look'it, that can't be used to feed the animals; that's got to go to human consumption. The boys are hungry over seas and that's got to go to feed the boys. Now see, that wheat has got to be taken out of there; its got to be milled. The barley has got to be taken out of there and put into pot barley, and that's got to go through to the boys; we got to get it over there." And y'know he never let on that he saw me. He gave my father a lecture. But that was the last year of the war; the war was over on the 11th of November and the cattle ate the grain after all. Oh, things were restricted.

In them days, hours meant nothing. We worked way after dark from first thing in the morning. You worked for a dollar a day. That's all you got, a dollar a day. Some men worked for fifteen dollars a month, but then they got organized.

I took over the farm in '31. Everything was done the

Duncan and his wife Alice

clumsy way. The cattle was tied in the stable all the time. Cleaning out the stable was a big job y'know; some old clumpy

---

In them days, hours meant nothing. We worked way after dark from first thing in the morning.

---

droppings there that had to be cleaned every day. I would also feed them. It was pretty steady work. You had a little leisure time; you could read the paper. The Globe and Mail was there at that time.

Oh yeah! Holy Moses, I know all about the Depression. My wife was teaching school you see, and when she paid all her debts she had two hundred dollars left! I hadn't any money left and that's the way we started out. Money came pretty slow, that's all. Wages were down a dollar a month. My brother and I worked together and so we got some money. Maybe it done us some good. We had to tighten our belts; make things for yourself. Mother would prepare food. We would buy a bag of sugar and a bag of flour from the mill to help us out. The worst was when the threshing mill came; she had to cook for about 12 men. But I dunno, the food was plainer, but it was good solid food; nourishing and filling.

In the Second World War it was just go right ahead and produce all that we could. That was the answer, produce all the cattle you could and all the food you could. They had to get food y'know, livestock, the pork, and the hens. We done pretty good in hens. We had about a 1000 hens there for a while. They kept you busy but it was light work. You'd market the eggs quite often. We liked the hens.

There was always a market for them, or for anything, during the war. Prices picked up a little bit.

I got my farm paid for with a crop of soup peas. The Frenchmen in Quebec like soup peas, and that's where the market was. Well, I went to work and I wound up 28 acres, tilled it all up good and everything, pulled out all the weeds, and sowed my peas. Combined it and took it in to Lindsay (Ottawa Valley Grain Products) in Renfrew, and when I got my cheque I got $3,011.00. I went and paid that on my mortgage. And that's the way I paid for my farm. If it wasn't for the war I wouldn't have been able to pay for my farm.

I got my farm paid for with a crop of soup peas.

When they started making us pay income tax we didn't think they should have. But the war was on, and it was easy to talk us into it 'cause everybody was patriotic. They needed money and everybody had boys overseas y'know, or a neighbour or someone. The whole community had one or two boys killed overseas. Just a nice age like you fellahs are. That's the cream of the country, that's what that is. Boys had it pretty rough over there. And when the war got over, there was some pretty sad homes.

With the war on everybody was busier, and the skating rink closed up. Sports got dead, y'know, you didn't hear about hockey games or ball games. Everybody was busy, the war was on everybody's mind, so it was easy to discipline people. Then we were also short of help on the farm. You see, they'd take fellahs out of school, like you fellahs, and put them to work. Pretty tough too, on the young fellahs. They sent boys from Ottawa to work on the farms. We had a boy from Ottawa for the summer, from a separate school there. And he worked all summer. Didn't know much about the farm but he was a help anyway; he could do things for us y'know. But as soon as the war was over he wanted to go back to school, when it re-opened. He was on a tractor, yes sir, but he didn't know how to handle livestock. Oh, we got along... we got along.

We got our combine then. My brother and I worked together with the combine; it worked pretty well. We were the first ones to get a combine in our county and we didn't understand it too well either. It wasn't the combine that made the grain wet, it was the man that cut it too early. Oh, we spoiled a bit of grain at first. Get the grain good and ripe. No use thinking it's good, you got to get it real dead, and then it'll keep in the bin. You have to learn these things. We got along pretty good.

We didn't have spare time but we didn't object to that. There were no sports at all, and we were always a little short of help. We had to work longer hours, y'know. We got a milk contract; that helped out a lot. I wasn't a person who hired much help. I didn't like much help, I liked to do my own work. And then my wife started coming out on the tractor. They never thought of it before. My mother would never think of a

Duncan and Alice McLaren

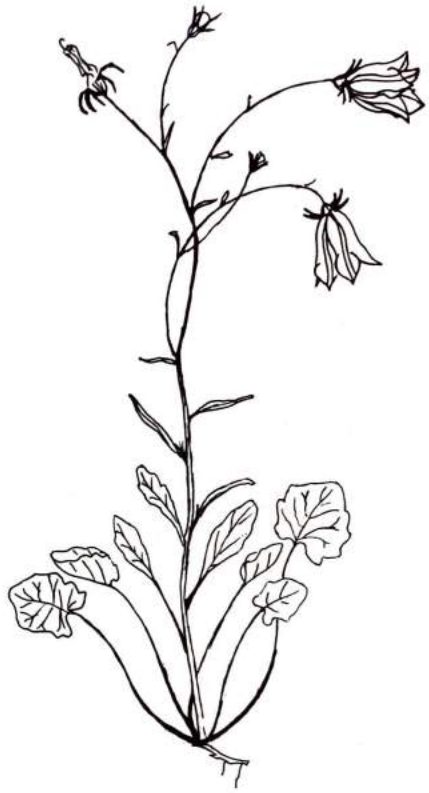
thing like that, but that lady did (gestures at his wife). She got on a tractor just as you and I, and they still got the meals on the table in a hurry too. Oh it's wonderful how you could get along. I think the war brought the ladies out into the field, up and running tractors and things like that 'cause there was a need.

I lived through the first war too. Of course, I was a teenager then. Oh, the boys must of had it awful over there. There was a fellah that worked with me when I was a teenager and he went overseas in France. He was in Dieppe when they took it. He said the first three tanks that rolled out, they blew them all to pieces, the Germans did. It was the fourth or fifth tank before they took the hill. And I said, what did you do when you were along there; if you saw something, would you take a shot at it? And he said, "No sir! I touch nothing!" Heh! Heh! "I touch nothing! I just go straight where I'm to go!" He told me a lot of things, I'd be surprised what he'd tell me. He said that behind the line you couldn't lip a superior officer, but you get them up in the front line and you could lip them. And he was right too. He said that the Germans would be right over there and he'd give him plenty of his opinion and he didn't hesitate a bit either. But you wouldn't do that back when you were training. He's living in Pembroke now. Oh yeah, he was a good lad.

But the first war was different. There'd be whole families going, four boys, three boys, all go in the army, and they weren't drafted; they just went. They thought it would be a small war and that it soon would be over. Yeah, that's what they thought. But ol' Kaiser, he put up a better fight than they thought. Not as good as Hitler, but he put up a good scrub just the same. I had an uncle who had three sons who went, one would go, then the next would go.

I think that my father prided himself in his work, and it was nice work. And that's the way it should be. My generation got into a big hurry."

As the interview ended Duncan showed us a plaque presented to his father by Sir John A. McDonald and reflected on a lifetime of farming in the Valley: "I have no regrets from farming. It's an open life y'know, that's nature's way."



Acknowledgements

TAMARACK wishes to express much appreciation for all those who were involved in the planning and implementation of the program. Without their time and assistance we would never have succeeded. Special thanks to:

Jim Haskins, former principal of Mackenzie High School, who allowed such a program to be offered.

Bert Horwood from Queen's University in Kingston whose interest and participation in the program has been an asset. We greatly appreciate his assistance and useful advice.

Gordon Ramsey, a parent, who has enthusiastically and actively supported us from the beginning. His time, planning, and resourcefulness have been important factors in the success of the program.

Charlotte McWilliam, an enthusiastic former English teacher, who has been joining in activities and following our endeavors.

Martin Elliott, a computer analyst with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, who has patiently worked with "desktop publishing illiterates" and contributed a great deal to the production of this magazine.

We would also like to thank the following people:

Deanna Andersen	Carl Hoelke
Jim Raffan	Colleen Archer
Jon Williams	Ann Davies
Ivan McWilliam	David Fleming
Gordon Murray	Andrew Ringlet

Thank You

TAMARACK would like to thank the following for their support of our program.

Anonymous

Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. - Chalk River

Canadian Tire Store - Deep River

First Deep River Boy Scouts

James J. Hickey Realty Ltd.

Darlene Patterson - Remax Realty

Petawawa National Forestry Institute

Petro - Canada

The Ottawa Citizen

Scotiabank - Deep River

Spokeshave Woodworks

Wilderness Tours

"Why not just let things
be as they are"

Johnston Patterson and his wife Sarah. From a tintype picture taken outside their log home on Sunday, 20 August 1880, just before the couple left for church. Johnston holds a grain cradle and Sarah, a broom.