Issue 3

$5.00

TAMARACK MAGAZINE

EXPLORATION OF VALLEY HISTORY

Mary Mitchell is a talented Valley writer who grew up in Bissett Creek. She was inspired and encouraged from an early age by her grandfather, who was the first to recognize her special gift for writing. Her kindness and optimism shone though during our short visit. We were entranced as we listened to Mrs. Mitchell recite the poems that come so naturally to her – straight from her heart...

Karen and Sarah

The Piper's Lullaby

by Mary Mitchell

He stood apart and held a golden lute
While children looked on him with happy faces,
Wreathed in smiles.
His cloak was of the rainbow hues
Oh Piper play they cried.
Then softly, sweetly came that first clear note.
That spoke of joy and happiness and angel's wings
They followed dancing lightly on the grass
Attuned to innocence, I saw them pass.

'Twas noon day when I chanced to meet
that same small band
The Piper stood with a cloak of gold
and from its hold he drew his magic lute
Oh sweet with promises of hope that tune he played,
They followed him through meadows gay.
I saw him pass and heard him play.

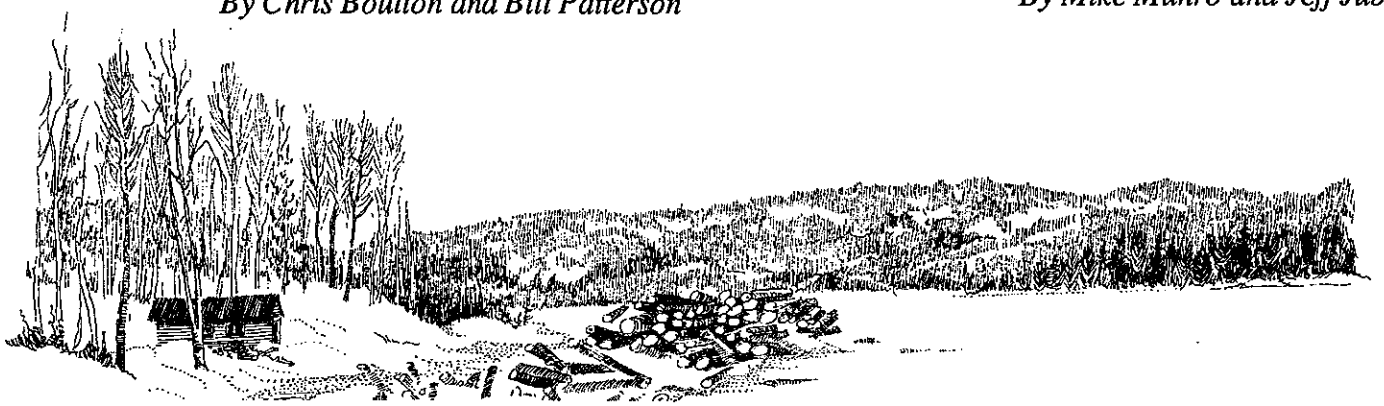
And later on when evening's sun had set
I stood upon the summit of a hill
When shadowy forms drew near all bent with age
And on each brow the frost of winter had descended now
Were these the same young innocents
I saw that far off yesteryear?
Ah yes, for hear again the Piper did appear
Oh, play us one last tune
With quavering voices they all whispered
With a sigh he answered
'Tis time for you to hear the Piper's lullaby.

TAMARACK
MAGAZINE

EXPLORATION OF VALLEY HISTORY

Mike Allmand
Alex Atfield
Sarah Bond
Chris Boulton
Nicole Carlucci
Seamus Frew
Andrea Ghent
Jeff Juby
Ben Kennedy
Brad Lance
Karen Linauskas
Julie Moon
John Morin
Mike Munro
Bill Patterson
Amanda St. Amand
Melissa Sones
Nadine Surette
Steve Tatone
Janet Ungrin
Jenn Young
Paul Joynes

Features



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 $5.00 + $1.00 handling.

Introduction

"Students seldom write history; they usually read it."

When those of us over 40 years of age look at the above statement, I expect that it pretty much describes our school experiences with history. Over the past several hundred years traditional oral histories in Western society have been replaced by written chronicles. History was written by the elite, for the elite (those who could read and write). Therefore, it became a story of the elite, a story of kings fighting kings or wars being fought over religious issues. The common people were not considered part of history; history was something that happened to them!

By producing this unique magazine, TAMARACK achieves the idea that high school students, not just adults and outside experts, are capable of documenting the history and cultural life of their community. Students conducted interviews, wrote the articles, produced the sketches, selected photographs, did much of the editing and prepared the "camera ready" copy for the printers. This magazine succeeds in putting into recorded history the people who belong there. The stories are their stories in their own words. In some instances minor editing has been done to convert the oral story into something that makes sense on paper.

The TAMARACK magazine, as a permanent record, has value as a community resource, but perhaps of even more value, are the meaningful relationships that develop between students and older people. To quote a student reflecting on his interview with Hector Vaillancourt for an earlier issue of TAMARACK:

"I hope that someday I will be able to talk about my life with the same enthusiasm as he talked about his."

"I learned a new attitude towards work. Now when I'm mowing lawns I stay an extra 15 minutes before I take a break. On a portage I do an extra 50 metres before resting. And I learned to whistle a happy tune while standing in the rain."

Bill Patterson

In Memoriam

We would like to pay tribute to the following people whom we interviewed for previous issues of TAMARACK magazine and who have passed away since issue two was produced.

Hugh Carmichael
Harry Leach
Lavina Larochelle
Duncan McLaren
Larry Ritza

in the morning for some strange reason. It's very embarrassing, particularly when you start a new job, to give a bad impression by missing the bus. We told Hedy of our predicament. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'I get up every morning and cook Andy a marvellous

Deep River had a lot of clubs ... even a snail-watcher's club!

breakfast.' She probably did! I wouldn't do anything like that of course, because I don't like cooking. At any rate, we would awaken in the morning to find Mrs. Leclair at the bottom of our bed ripping the sheets off, saying 'Get up! Get up!' This went on for several weeks until Jack got into the swing of waking up at a decent hour and catching the bus. Everyone who was hired at AECL was first investigated thoroughly by the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). The year before we came AECL still had a guard at the entrance to Deep River; the old security fence used to come right along where Faraday is now. One day, a rather strange individual crawled into our apartment, begging. A very strange, unsettling type of person. I was a little nervous so I called Mrs. Leclair over. She got on the phone right away under the pretence of going to get him a glass of water, and the guards came in no time to haul him off.

At first I thought it was going to be hard making new friends but it wasn't. In fact, I didn't find it difficult at all. We became fast friends with a lot of the people my husband worked with. You do make friends now, but perhaps not as close as you did in those early years – at least not the deep, deep friendships that we had back then.

A lot of women hated it here with a passion; they felt they were isolated. As a matter of fact, my mother-in-law thought Deep River was the last outpost. She hated it here when she came to visit. She only came twice! Nowadays I think being in the workforce probably helps women to cope with the so-called isolation; though it's not isolated here any more.

In the 50's and 60's, entertainment was what you tended to make it; Deep River had a lot of clubs. It seems to me there were sixty-something different clubs – even a snail-watchers club! There was a women's club which would call on newcomers and say, 'Come on out, we're going to play broomball, bring your children.' That was always a lot of fun, you know. You really didn't give two hoots about how your house looked! I certainly didn't care! So what if I had to do laundry? That could wait!

As a member of the Yacht Club, you could participate in a lot of the doos. We joined strictly for the social events; we didn't even own a yacht! Things weren't catered back then, so we organized our own parties. Jack was in charge of the music, and my role, as vice-commodore, was to make sure there was lots of toilet paper.

I used to think it was the end of the world if we weren't going out dancing Saturday night or doing something fun. A girlfriend and I used to go to the movies every Monday regardless of what was on. We'd go very early because there was only one spot where we could sit and

Laurie and a friend in front of 6 Huron St., Deep River

really hear properly. We'd always grab those seats.

Mrs. Lorna Bourns liked to put on variety shows – that was my meat! Tap dancing was fantastic; I loved that kind of thing! So Lorna recruited me and a few other people to dance. Oh it was great! We used to do all our practising over at Hill House. Mr. Bob Manson used to play piano for these shows. They were usually held in the old community centre (where the bowling alley is now). Gosh they were packed! I remember one year we did the Can-Can. It was hilarious! I was the one who had to take my garter off at the end and stand in between the curtains and fling it backwards so someone could catch it! It was quite a feat you know!

When we came, the branches at AECL were quite small. Jack's branch would have a get-together once a month down where Long Shot's Sports Cafe is now. We would have a party there for about 30 of us. We were each told to bring something by whomever was organizing it. For example, I was told to bring 50 sandwiches. Somebody would put on a record player and a pleasant little dance would be held. If you like dancing you can have fun anywhere!

When we came here, Byeways, in Point Alexander, was the one place where you could go out to dine. I think they used to serve chicken, with apple pie for dessert. They considered their apple pie to be the best. It wasn't very fancy you know, but it was really something to go out to dinner. If the kids had a birthday, we took them up there.

The can-can at a variety show – Mrs. Atherley is on the right.

I'm a summer person and when the summer comes, I am in my element. I loathe winter! I'd like to be able to hibernate. I swear every year, if another person tells me to take up cross-country skiing, I'll flip their skis around their head! I can accomplish three times as much in the summer. I love summer, I love Pine Point! I live at Pine Point. It was not a public beach back then. But Jack always had a canoe and was a big fisherman, so we used to put the canoe in down by the old pump house with our daughter Laurie. From there, we'd paddle up to Pine Point, and sometimes across the river to some of the beaches there.

We used to go away on a lot of camping trips because nobody could afford to take holidays. A whole gang would go and we'd usually head up to Grand Lake (in the Achray region of Algonquin Park). That would always be a lot of fun. Lots of children, lots of friends – lots of swimming!

I used to think it was the end of the world if we weren't going out dancing Saturday night...

One just lived for the shopping bus! AECL provided us with a bus for the grand old sum of fifteen cents or a quarter. You went into civilization; into Pembroke! Because there was no liquor store or beer store in Deep River, all of your friends, and people who weren't your friends, might hear that you were going and say, 'Pick me up a case of beer,' 'Pick me up a bottle of Scotch!' Then before you knew it, there you were, loaded with all this liquor hoping that people didn't think you were going to imbibe all this stuff. It was very

embarrassing, so you quickly learned to keep the trip a deep, dark secret.

I believe I started working as a receptionist in '67. The medical secretary at the hospital was leaving suddenly and my family doctor, Dr. Lapp, called me and said, 'How would you like a job?' I said, 'Don't be stupid! Why would I want to work? I've got children.' 'Well you'd really be helping us out' he said, 'I wish you'd consider it.' A week later, Dr. Lapp called back and

You went into civilization; into Pembroke!

said they were desperate. Then one of the other physicians telephoned and said, 'I really wish you'd reconsider Barbara' and I said, 'God, there must be loads of people who are dying for the job.' 'Yes' he said, 'But we want someone who's sensible and discreet.' Of course that really appealed to me! Me, sensible? So I said, 'Alright, but it's temporary, it really is temporary.' So here I am thirty-some years later, still working as a medical secretary. Only now, I run Dr. Gasmann's office. (Mrs. Atherley retired in April of 1995, a month after the interview).

The town of Deep River was AECL. AECL was the Great White Father – they looked after everything. In the summer months, they sent an insecticide truck around; a funny machine that would spew out all this ghastly fog. It really did keep the flies down! We've learned since that that's why there weren't so many birds around! A lot of the kids would go out and run behind the machine and inhale all the stuff! I don't know if it did them any harm or not, but it couldn't have been good for them. They wouldn't dream of using the insecticide now, but a lot of us old-timers swear it was the most marvellous stuff for keeping blackflies and mosquitos under control!

Back then, the town used to

Mrs. Atherley and her daughter Laurie

Mrs. Atherley in 1953

be far, far cleaner. There were a lot of receptacles for garbage which were actually used. Workmen were constantly picking up garbage. People used to come to Deep River, and their first remark would be how beautifully clean this place was. I mean there's no comparison now. It's disgusting!

I don't think its ever, ever going back to the way it was, you know when AECL was the Great White Father. I hear concerns even now and I get a little uptight about this because AECL has been very, very good to us. I think Deep River was a lovely place to have children grow up, and I believe a lot of people have found it an absolutely marvellous place to live."

"It was hardships, a lot of hardships. But just the same we learned a lot, you know."

As we turned onto Gleeson Lane we approached the long-time home of Nora Gleeson, a large two story house lightly covered with snow and surrounded by a cluster of pine trees. Mrs. Gleeson met us at the door with a heart warming smile that soon put our nerves at ease as she welcomed us into her home. Antique furniture filled the house, including a wash basin dating back to her childhood days. Mrs. Gleeson was born in a little farm house on Josie Lane in 1903 where she lived for 22 years with her parents and grandparents. She moved into her present home on Wylie Road in 1925 when she married her husband Billy Gleeson, and has resided there ever since.

At age 92, Nora Gleeson lives independently in her home. Certificates from the Prime Minister and MP's congratulating her on her 90th birthday are proudly displayed above her bed. She has lived a full and enjoyable life here in the Ottawa Valley during which time she has seen Deep River established, and develop to what it is today.

Mrs. Gleeson quickly captured our interest as she began talking about her life here in the Ottawa Valley...

Mrs. Nora Gleeson, 1995

by Julie Moon and John Morin

"I was born October fourth, way back in 1903. Up where Brian Burke lives on Josie Lane, that was my home. That's where I was born. As kids, my husband and I lived only three miles apart up the back roads. I was away at school in Pembroke and Haileybury for a couple of years, but apart from that, I've been here on Wylie Road ever since. This farm is the old Gleeson place.

In the early 1900's, you were about seven years old when you started school. There was no kindergarten; the teacher had all the classes from beginning to end in one room. There were three schools here then; Point Alexander is where I went. There was also the Wylie School, right where Tom Scully lives now (just in on Wylie Road from the highway) and the other school was out past Elliotts, on Wylie Road nearer to Chalk River. After grade eight, if you wanted to go any further, you had to go to Pembroke. I think there were about three of us who wrote entrance exams to high school. I went to school in a convent in Pembroke for a year, then I took a business course at Haileybury Business College in 1920. I never got up to Haileybury 'til February because the flu was so bad that year. It was a six month course, and they took holidays for the month of July. I came home after the school closed for the summer up there. I was one month short of graduation but I never went back because there was enough work for me at home. See, that's how come I didn't graduate the same as the others. I was 17, I guess, when I finished school.

School was strict; straps and

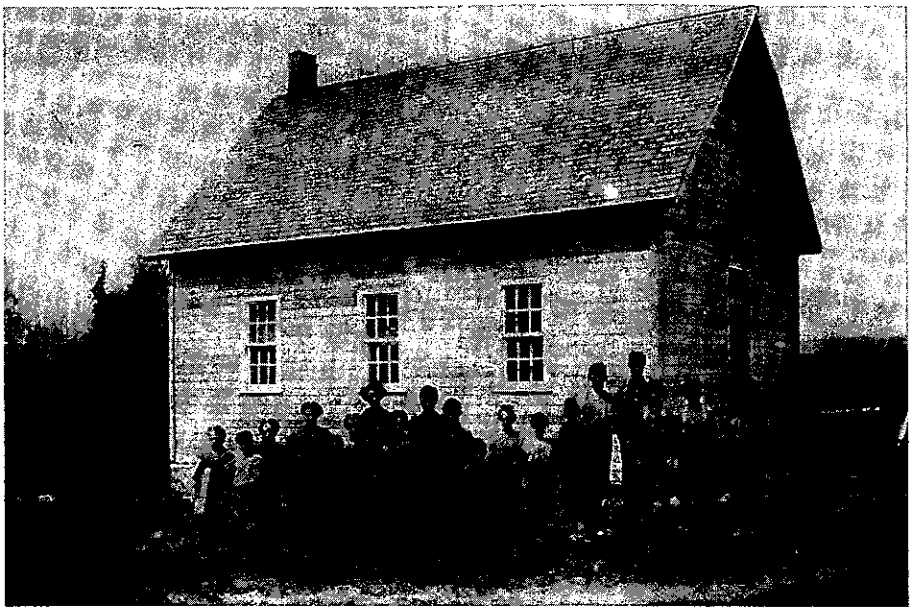
everything else. I got the strap once; I had one mistake in spelling and got three whacks. Now wasn't that sensible?!? Misbehaviour was not such a problem. The kids that misbehaved were kept in after school and the teachers used to put a dummies cap on them and sit them in the corner. The teachers had those pointers for the black board, and boy, some of the kids used to get them across the fingers too. Oh, I tell you, we had cross teachers!

We walked two or three miles to school. I always think of the kids nowadays who take buses and how easy they have it. The only roads we had were the old portagers trails on which they used to haul grain and hay. The portagers would come up the river on the ice and come off at Balmer's Bay; it used to be called Renaud's Bay. Then they'd go up to Big Lake – that's way up the Dumoine. The portagers had big sleighs and

Oh, I tell you, we had cross teachers!

we'd sometimes get a ride with them when we were coming home from school. But you were better off walking; it was warmer than sitting on the sleigh.

I wasn't very old when the automobile came in. I remember we were going home from church on Sunday when we met a car coming. We all had to get out of the buggy and get off the road because the horses had never seen a car before.



Wylie School, built in 1894 for the sum of $505

The wagon road was rough with pot holes and everything. I remember my youngest brother, who was a baby, sitting on the floor of the buggy. Baby boys wore dresses at that time. My mother had her feet on his clothes to hold him down so he wouldn't fall out, because she had to hang onto the wagon with both of her hands. I remember Mrs. Gleeson (mother in-law) saying that's what she had to do with her son when she went up the Dumoine to her sister's. That's the kind of roads there were at that time!

I ran the Wylie Post Office here in my home for a year after I got married. The house across from Gleeson Lane on Wylie Road was Mr. Lyon's; that's where the first post office was in Wylie. When Mr. Lyon moved away he recommended my mother-in-law for the post office job. She must have had the post office here for 20 years anyhow and maybe more than that. There weren't any cars at that time, so Mr. Gleeson (father in-law) used to walk to Wylie Station three times a week, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to get the mail. He only got paid a dollar a trip. At that time they hung the mail bag up on an arm beside the tracks. The train never stopped; a swinging arm on the moving train picked up the mail by hooking onto the bag on the arm at the station. Another arm on the train dropped off the in-coming mail into a net as the train went by. Sometimes if the mail fell off the hook, it would be spilled and ruined you know; but that didn't

happen here anytime. I think Mrs. Gleeson (mother-in-law) got $20 a month for looking after the post office. Billy's parents moved away and I took it over for a year until we got rural mail in 1927, Mrs. McCarthy was our mail-lady from Chalk River.

The Lucas' and Adams' used to be the only ones living down where Deep River is now. In fact,

...you were better off walking; it was warmer than sitting on the sleigh.

Dave Adams' little house is still by the tennis court. That little log house was his original home. Dover's store was the only store in the area; they're gone now, but they used to be in Chalk River. They had a hotel in Chalk River too. The Copps' used to live there. You know Sheila Copps, the member of parliament, her grandmother and grandfather built the place. The hotel used to be Copp's Hotel before Dover's bought it.

This area wasn't good farming country. There were a few farms that were good, but mostly it was either too wet or too sandy. We always had a lot to eat. We'd kill a beef in the fall and we'd have our own meat for the winter. We had to go to Chalk River if we wanted to buy anything. That was a days travel at that time, to drive to Chalk River with the horses and back. The farmers used to sell the grain in the fall to make money. They'd take the grain down in a sleigh, in the wintertime to the milling company in Pembroke to get it ground for pig feed. The cream trucks used to come around, but nobody made very much money on cream, eggs or butter. There was lots of work here, cows to milk, hens, pigs and sheep to feed. I used to milk the cows, once I got big enough. We always had our chores; feed the pigs at night, bring in the wood and water. Everybody had their job. The boys did the bringing in of the wood and the water and the girls made the meals. That's what we used to have to do.

We had to make our own fun, we used to play ball and things like that, you know, like buffle ball. We always had baseball at school. We had teams, the girls and the boys. Everybody knew everybody else around here and in Chalk River. We used to go there to the baseball games. There were a few dances around. There was always, from Christmas onto Lent, a dance every weekend at someones house. People would take bread, canned salmon and butter with them and make sandwiches there at the dance. We'd dance 'til four o'clock in the morning. I'd say there'd be 50 people in one house or maybe more than that. They'd have a room for square dancing and round dancing where the furniture would be pushed aside. There weren't any radios. We used violins. Maybe two or three played the fiddle. If there was a piano or an organ, there was somebody at that too. My brothers all played the violin. That's the only entertainment we had. There wasn't the drinking, that's for sure! There was no place to get it unless they made homebrew!

I remember the first show (movie) we went to was in the POW (Prisoner of War) camp that used to be located at Hill Park in Deep River. The movie was "Going my Way" with Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald. We walked from here at night to see that show. The show was in a big tent at Hill House.

That was a lifesaver when they started the plant (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd, AECL) down there, I tell you, because people got work. At first AECL brought portable houses and trailers from Nobel, down near Parry Sound, to Deep River.

That was a lifesaver when they started the plant...

They were small wartime houses. Later AECL built some bigger houses around town. Families then came in and built their own homes. When they started the plant, it was a secret. Nobody knew what was going on there for so long, you know, 'cause the war wasn't over yet. People

only knew that it was run by Atomic Energy, but they didn't know what they were doing there. I guess they moved all of the head people here from elsewhere, but the people from around here also got a lot of work. There were people living here from Prince Edward Island and all over Canada. Billy (Nora's husband) was one of the first guards here in Deep River. You couldn't get into the townsite unless you passed the guard."

When asked to reflect on the differences between her day and nowadays, Nora Gleeson commented...

"I sure wouldn't like to be trying to raise a family nowadays you know – with dope. Concern for dope used to bother me when my grandchildren were growing up. One time I was going to Ottawa on the bus, when a couple got on in Renfrew, and they were smoking. At that time, you could smoke on buses. I wondered what the funny smell was. Another time I was walking down the street in North Bay with my granddaughter Laurie and I said 'I smell the same thing that those kids in front of me on the bus to Ottawa were smoking.' Laurie said 'that's pot.'

I think I'd just as soon things were the way they were. There was more obedience at that time too. If your parents told you to do something you did it or else! But I think that's what is wrong with us today. With a lot of the kids there's nobody at home when they get home. We had to do our work and make our own fun and everything. It was hardships, a lot of hardships. But just the same, we learned a lot, you know."

Wylie train station circa 1890

"I explained to Dr. Keys my plan to make Cedar Swamp into Cedar Park."

Bill Rounding has travelled through most of Canada since his birth in 1909. His contribution wherever he has lived, has earned him the respect of many people. He has collected many memorabilia which he displays in a small room in his house on Hillcrest Ave. in Deep River. His favourites include a pair of beautifully handcrafted snowshoes mounted above the door. They were given to him in appreciation for some volunteer work that he did in a community on the East Coast of James Bay. A fiddle with rounded corners that belonged to his grandfather hangs on one wall. On another, two book shelves hold numerous old books and act as display shelves for some of the smaller artifacts. A key-wound pocket watch which belonged to his grandfather, sits on one of these shelves. Pictures of family and friends are mounted around the room. In the corner closest to the door, framed, congratulatory certificates honour his and his wife Florence's 50th wedding anniversary. On the same wall, other certificates pertaining to his work as a councillor for Deep River are also displayed.

Bill and Florence Rounding in 1982

It was obvious just from looking at this room that Bill Rounding has led a very fulfilling and eventful life.

By Mike Allmand and Chris Boulton

"I was born in Bowling Green, Ontario, 60 miles north of Toronto. I was brought up in Grand Valley, which is a town of 800 people, maybe five miles from where I was born. My mother Emma was Scottish, my father Willis was English. I had four sisters and no brothers.

My father was a general farmer. For years he was secretary of the school board as well as a trustee. He was on township council for East Luther Township in the County of Dufferin. He was also roads boss (road maintenance supervisor) among other things.

In the summertime I had to go and get the cows from the field and let them out again when they were finished milking. In the winter I had to clean out the stables. We had sheep, pigs and horses; they were all pets, every one of them was a pet. My chores in the house were to keep the wood box full and the water reservoir on the old wood burning stove full at all times.

School was great! I never remember having had a poor, bad, insecure or uncertain

teacher. I never had anything but the best teachers!

My most memorable time at school was when I first entered high school in Grand Valley. It was such a change, switching from the little country school to the big high school. There were maybe 300 kids in high school. Although there were more people, each grade had its own classroom. Not eight classes in one little room! That was the big difference.

At school, if we did something wrong, our punishments were strappings! I think that was proper! I have no resentment. It gets the point across! Actually it's quick and painless. The teachers were always very careful not to really hurt you.

Once in a while, if your guilt was not too pronounced, you'd have a discussion. The principal would say 'What should your punishment be?'

You'd say 'Well, keep me in at recess or...'

'What about a strapping?'

'Well, I don't think what I did was bad enough for a strapping!'

He'd say 'Well I agree with you'. I think the discussion taught me more than the strapping. Incidently, I never got a strapping. However, on one afternoon I played hookey. It was a beautiful day and two or three of us didn't come back after lunch. The principal phoned my father and he said 'Your son didn't

Bill and his sister Thelma as children

come to school this afternoon and I'm not sure what I should do.'

My father said 'If his marks are good and he hasn't failed any exams recently, I wouldn't do anything. Just tell him not to play hookey again!'

I played all the games there were, we all did. Unless you were lame and halty you participated. There was no question about it. At recess we couldn't get out quick enough to grab a ball and bat and play ball! I have a little scar on my forehead from lacrosse. A guy scalped me with the wood side of the stick! Later, he married one of my sisters! I played ball, lacrosse and hockey. I played all the games.

Lionel Conacher was the best athlete in Canada. He was the 'Big Train' for the first half of this century. He was Dominion Boxing Champion and he played lacrosse for the Mimico Terriers. When I was a junior on the lacrosse team, I could play three games for the seniors, without losing my junior status. I had the distinct pleasure of playing one game against Lionel Conacher! I could run as fast as he could run, but there was no way that I could get the ball out of his stick. I couldn't check him, I couldn't stop him, I could just run fruitlessly beside him!

I went to Trinity College, which was part of the University of Toronto, in 1932. I studied engineering. I guess there would have been about a hundred of us. It's interesting, I never did graduate. I had to go to work before I could finish school.

There were all sorts of social events in Grand Valley. We had a school debating society and

At recess we couldn't get out quick enough to grab a ball and bat and play ball!

occasionally we'd have a big debate in the evening. We used to have public spelling bees on a platform downtown on Saturday. There were four or five churches and every church put on three or four plays a year. All the plays were well attended. Then there were church and school athletics,

in summer and winter. At a very early age I joined the choral group and for years I sang with my father and sisters. The choral group would put on musical events three or four times a year. I always had something to do with the school newspaper and I used to have a column in the local newspaper, the Star and

Bill Rounding in his twenties with his horse Roma

Vidette. In the winter we did a lot of sleigh riding. Everybody had a good bobsled and usually a toboggan for the little ones.

As a child, to get around in the summer, I never had a bicycle, but I had my horse Roma. To get to sports events in the summer we travelled by train. In the wintertime we travelled by horse and sleigh. The hockey teams were never very far away. Shelborne was maybe 16 miles or so, Arthur was 12 miles, Orangeville was 12 miles and Fergus was 15 miles. That was about the extent of our travels in the winter.

The first job I ever had was cleaning out the school and lighting the fires in the wintertime. I believe my wages were $50 a year! A few years later, I would look after somebody's cows or I'd go over to a neighbours and help them for 25 cents a day.

One day, in the midst of the Depression, I was running home from the pool room in Grand Valley, when I saw a barn on fire. I yelled towards the house and I rushed into the barn and got the horses and cattle out. The next week I received a thank you letter with a ten dollar gold coin inserted into the envelope!

When World War II began, I went down to enlist in Sault Ste. Marie; I was working there. They asked where I was working and I said in the steel mills. 'Well then you're frozen there. You are going to stay right there until the war is over. We need the steel that you're producing,' they told me. I was the field engineer for the expansion of the mill at that time. The demand was so big that we had to build huge extensions to the steel mill. We had 63 coke ovens (used to melt steel), a new wharf and we built a big bloom mill that would produce a 44 inch by 6 foot deep bloom (block of steel) twice a day. The bloom was then manufactured into all kinds of things. Those were pretty hectic times.

I came to Deep River in 1947. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) advertised for a construction job; I applied and got it. My first job in Deep River was to build 30 houses. This house (49 Hillcrest) was the last one of those houses built on this side of town. At that time we started the park across the street (at the corner of Hillcrest and Sylvie). We decided that we needed a park of our own, so we set about getting one. When the park was completed, we started having the July 1st fireworks here. Our kids used to go up and down the streets around here collecting fifty cents from each house to buy fireworks. We'd have a big party at the park. In the winter, we built a local rink there. Each street was in charge of looking after the rink for a week. It worked out great because each street looked after it for four weeks over the course of the winter.

Unless you were lame and halty you participated ... no questions about it.

I've been on Deep River Council for 25 years. As a councillor I helped establish Centennial Rock and the Vault (time capsule below the rock, encased in a concrete box). Dr. Keys, Les Haywood and myself found a nice big rock, and brought it

down from Elliot Lake during the summer of 1967 to use as Centennial Rock.

Cedar Park is another of my accomplishments. It was a swamp called Cedar Swamp that was full of trees. I got the idea to make a park out of it. I invited Dr. Keys, who was the 'Grandfather' of Deep River, to come down and have a look at it with me. I explained to him my plan to make Cedar Swamp into Cedar Park. He said it would be a good idea and he asked me to make a map of it. I brought the transit up and mapped it all out. We cleared out the dead trees and drained the park area. We enlarged the creek and took it around to it's present location. We then brought in top soil, seeded it and called it Cedar Park. Jac Cropley and the Community Association developed it from there.

Centennial Rock in Deep River

I retired from AECL in 1973 at the age of 65. I've been very busy ever since! I'm a volunteer for the Canadian Executive Service Overseas (CESO). You have to be retired to be a member, so you become a volunteer. I'm a construction volunteer. I supervise, do the engineering, do the surveying. I started this immediately after I retired."

The CESO does volunteer work for communities that cannot afford or do not have access to various services.

"Eastmain is the smallest of the Indian Cree villages in North Western Quebec. It's just a wee place on the coast of James Bay. For years they were promised an air strip, but they were always denied government support. In the end they just gave up playing by the rules and phoned up to ask if I could come up and help them out. I rented a helicopter and studied the terrain around Eastmain. I found an ideal spot for the airstrip on a ridge which was fairly close to town. There was enough earth and rock in the area to build this air strip, so I brought down the transit and all the equipment from Fort George. I got a small crew going and cut a four foot strip right down the middle of the ridge. We then started to widen the strip. Eventually we cleared it all and then I made a real survey. I got all of the different elevations and then I sat down and worked on a table for three to four days. All we had was an old D3 bulldozer, so I had to make cuts on the ridges and use that material to fill in the low spots. I worked it all out so we wound up with an air strip 300 feet wide and the ditch on both sides 2100 feet long. You could tell the Cree didn't work very hard at first, but then during July they started getting excited; we had to put two shifts on the bulldozer. It worked 16 hours a day. I'm so proud of those guys they worked like Trojans! We finished the strip in the beginning of November, 1978. The first plane landed on November 7."

I never had anything but the best teachers.

Bill Rounding is an asset to Deep River. His contribution to our community was recognized recently with the Honourary Citizen Award. We can't think of a more deserving recipient.

"Yes, my life was quite wild you know..."

Alma Wallis has led an eventful life, full of many challenges and unique experiences. She spent her early childhood in Kapuskasing, and moved to Newpost on the Abitibi River when she was in her teens. In addition to having travelled all over the world to pursue her hobby of photography, Mrs. Wallis raised her four children singlehandedly in Belleville after the sudden death of her husband.

At 82, she still lives in the house she and her brother built, maintaining an independent lifestyle despite her loss of sight in recent years.

With little need for prompting, Mrs. Wallis shared with us many humorous and enlightening stories from her life in Northern Ontario and about raising her children. "I used to travel with Dad quite a lot; there were all men and no women, but everything was just peachy! I knew how to do everything they could do. Oh there is so much to tell, yes my life was quite wild you know..."

By Melissa Sones and Ben Kennedy

"My brother Fred was about the same age I was. He was like Huckleberry Finn, and I was stuck to him. I thought he was the smartest guy in the world! We had to know everything, always. We had to touch things and find out what they were.

There was this skunk walking along, and you know a skunk can't run. He won't run from anything, because nature has given him such a good repellent for defence he doesn't have to. So away he goes with his tail over his back, you see. We knew that if he did that, he wouldn't spray us unless we startled him, so we followed him. We knew he wouldn't spray us!

There was a little old fence along there, made out of cedar logs. We followed the skunk and he'd look at us. We got him in a corner, but he couldn't get through the fence. Now we had him, so we could really take a look at him! We got closer and closer and were looking at his feet and tail. This old skunk was looking at us with his little black eyes, and he knew we weren't going to hurt him.

But when a skunk stamps his feet and raises his tail a little bit, you know darn well that he's warning you what he's going to do! So he's stamping his feet, and Fred says 'It's alright Alma, as long as he's facing us everything's OK.'

Well, how wrong we were! A skunk can direct his spray, even if he's looking you right in the face. He was aiming at us with his tail up and behind him. So we got well sprayed anyway. But we learned, see; you have to learn these things! But we had a good life.

As children we had to walk about a mile through the bush to school in Kapuskasing, and it was cold in the wintertime. We'd get to town where there was a big iron bridge for the train to go across the river. To me it seemed like 200 feet high, but I guess it wasn't that much. You know how a railroad is? Big square

timbers all creosoted and laid down there with steel and everything, about three or four inches apart. Fred and I had to walk across that bridge to get to the school on the other side!

Well on that big black bridge, about every hundred feet, there would be a projection to hold a barrel of water. You know, a 45 gallon barrel, just in case the wheels of the train took fire as they sometimes did. We didn't know when the train was going to come along, so Fred and I would run. I was afraid I was going to fall through those four-inch cracks! I could see the water way down below, and Fred would take my hand and we'd run as fast as we could to the comparative safety of the little projections. Well, we crossed that bridge every day and we were terrified.

Fred said to me, 'Alma, as soon as those logs down there in the river for the mill freeze, we're going to cross on them!' Well you know how tightly packed those logs are in the Kapuskasing River. The logs never freeze solid, because there's water underneath and the logs are bobbing up and down, maybe an inch at a time.

One day they were frozen pretty good, but you could still move them. Fred found a spot and we went across with our little feet, trying not to slip on those jolly logs! We walked across there, two small kids, six and seven. But had we slipped a little bit you know, we'd never have been found. Fred said 'don't tell Mom.' No, I sure didn't tell Mom!

Alma Wallis with her younger brother John, trapping at Newpost on the Abitibi

Now Fred and I trapped together, because everyone had to work in pairs. When I was about 17, he was about 18. We'd go every week to look at our trap lines, and collect the fur.

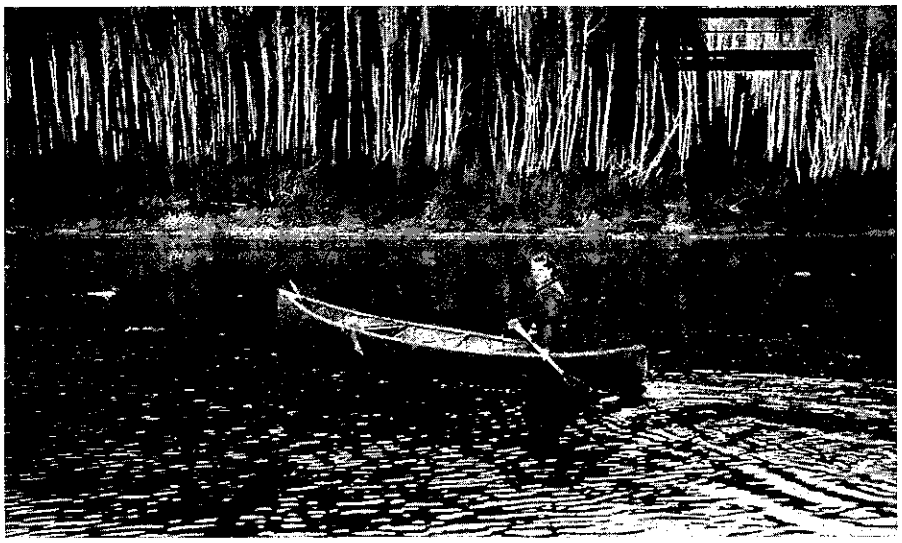
Yes, I taught myself taxidermy, but it wasn't too difficult for me...

I tried to bring everything into the house and tame them, including two moose. The wolves killed the mothers and so Dad brought the little ones home, we kept them in the tent. They played with us and everything!

I learned how to pole and paddle up those big rapids on the Abitibi River. We trapped right into unsurveyed territory in Quebec. We went up the Little Abitibi and crossed over the great portages and into the Bad River and into the French River.

I learned how to skin animals, and this is how I became a real good taxidermist. Yes, I taught myself taxidermy, but it wasn't too difficult for me because I knew the anatomy of the animals. I knew how to skin them and cure them and put them together. I read in some magazines that you could learn taxidermy by correspondence. I wrote to the States that month and got a lesson in the mail. Yep, I learned through correspondence! I did everything.

You know, I like to paint. I painted everything, all the wildlife. There weren't many boards, but in the springtime sometimes boards would float down from the dam, and we'd catch them for our own use. I would carve on the boards. Sometimes I'd get my brother Fred to cut down a tree and split it so I'd have something to paint on. Then we'd take broken glass, because we had no planes or tools of any kind except



Alma Wallis paddling her cedar-strip canoe on the Abitibi River

the axe, and we'd smooth the wood down until it was as smooth as a tabletop!

I used to paint moose, and everything that I knew up north. Any Indian or white man that stopped at our place would come up and have something to eat. I'd get their paddles, you know, and on the paddle blade I carved moose and deer and beavers and everything. I don't think it strengthened the paddle any, but it looked good and the men all liked it! I also carved on their gun stocks. So, many of the old fashioned guns have a moose head carved into them; that was me!

My son Bill, I never thought I looked after him well enough because he always wanted to be an artist like me. When he was a little fellow, only about six years old, he decided he wasn't going to school any later than high school, that was it! So I thought there was something wrong, that it was my fault. He'd go to the little red schoolhouse in Belleville; everybody knew us.

I had been painting in the living room. It had gyproc on it; the house was only half done. I was painting snowy owls catching rabbits, ducks flying and everything else up there on that white background, and it looked good you know! One day Bill went to school, and his teacher said to him 'How's your mother?' Bill said 'Oh, she's fine. She's drawing pictures on the wall now!'

I've got thousands of photographs. I've given all the northern ones to the kids, because people down here don't understand them. But I've gone to a lot of universities, and it's wonderful to talk to those fellas because they don't know what we have, here in Canada, you know.

I only had the one camera when I was a kid, believe it or not. Yep, I started taking pictures when I was 16 or 17, up north. We were hundreds of miles away from town, and we only came out twice a year. We had those box cameras, you know? Our film was 25 cents, black and white film.

The Department of Education thought that it's ten times better to show pictures, since children never forgot them, than for the teacher to teach all year. I think they're right. When I moved away from Belleville and came up here, I was asked to go to Petawawa. Of course, there were hundreds of soldiers there. Well, we had a big meal and when I finished showing pictures, a lot of them came down and talked to me about the pictures.

These four big soldiers came down and they said 'Mrs. Wallis, we know you but I guess you don't know us', and I said 'No I don't!' So they said 'Well, when we lived in Belleville we were Cubs there!' I used to show pictures to Cubs too. They said they remembered the pictures from when they were little kids, and they told me about the

I never thought I looked after him well enough because he wanted to be an artist like me!

pictures I had shown them. All those years, it must have been 25 years, they remembered! So you remember pictures, you see!

You know Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, the first one in Canada? I spent eight days there with professional photographers. Now I was scared to go there. They think I'm a professional but I'm not. I'm just like you! I just got a camera and took pictures; nobody taught me to do any of these things.

But somebody saw my pictures and they asked me if I'd go to Halifax to speak with the Canadian Club. I said I don't drive, but they arranged for me to go anyway. Heavenly day, I've never driven a car in my life; my speed is a canoe or a dog team!

But by travelling this way you see things. It's kind of stupid for people to say 'Well, I'm going to Alaska' and get on a coach or in a car, and whiz there and whiz back in seven or eight days, and then say they've been to Alaska. They've never seen anything. You've got to be some place and live there, you know, to see all these things!

Heavenly day, I've never driven a car in my life; my speed is a canoe or a dog team!

I'm all for the Indians because they've been here for a heck of a long time, and they have never ruined anything. Up north, you should see it up there. The natives can live there for hundreds of years and there's no garbage around anywhere! But then you get a white fellow from Toronto or somewhere, with two or three others, who think 'Oh, this is a grand spot.' And by the time they leave, there's milk cartons and cigarette packages and broken bottles. And they were only there one or two nights!

You don't need much to survive up north. Heavenly day, I can go up there and stay for eight months in my cabin. And I'm comfortable in there. There's a room there with a bed, an eiderdown, and a table there with a few cups, a stove and a kettle and a few things like that. You can close the door and go away for a year. I never even lock them! People will come in if they need to warm themselves or something, but that place has never been touched! Now those people are nice, they're decent people.

I was busy, but after my husband died, I wanted to show the youngsters as they grew up what a good country we had. I wanted them to see all the animals, to know them. I got a canoe, and I taught them how to use it in the Bay of Quinte.

When we were kids, whenever we wanted anything up there we simply made it, we didn't go to a store. If you broke paddles, you made them; if you broke an axe handle or ruined your canoe, you just simply made another one. And that's what we did when I was young.

Yeah, life is not just today, it goes on, and on, and on. And it's not all fun; I mean you have to work hard when you're young. You can't waste one or two years just fooling around, because otherwise you don't live long enough to do all the things you want to do!"

"Gee, that's one job I liked – drivin' logs!"

With a twinkle in his eye and an infectious smile, Reggie Boucher welcomed us into his home in Rapides Des Joachims to talk about his life in the Dumoine River area.

Reggie was born in 1913 at Caribbean Farm, a stopping place located west of the Dumoine River about 40 km north of the village of Des Joachims. As an infant, he and his family moved to the Boucher Stopping Place, which his parents and grandparents operated on the Dumoine Road. Twelve of the first 18 years of his life were spent at that location; the rest of his youth was spent in Pembroke.

After working at a variety of jobs throughout Ontario, Reggie returned to Des Joachims in the mid 40's to work for Ontario Hydro. He was very involved with the construction of the Des Joachims Generating Station and he worked with Ontario Hydro until he retired in 1978.

Reggie Boucher and Chris Boulton

Reggie and his wife Emmeline had three boys - one of whom still lives near Deep River. Mrs. Boucher died eight years ago.

As we discussed Des Joachims and the Dumoine River region in the early days, Reggie reminisced about the stopping places, life off the beaten path, the building of the Des Joachims dam and one of his favourites – the log drive. We had the feeling that he enjoyed talking about this part of his life as much as we enjoyed listening to him.

By Chris Boulton and Bill Patterson

"My grandfather came from Kamaraska on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. He came to Des Joachims when he was 21 by steam boat from Pembroke. Docked at the village here. When they got here, there was a cart with oxen haulin' it, waiting. They put their packs in the cart and had to walk up the Dumoine to wherever they were going. My grandfather used to tell me about cutting logs and squaring the timbers right there in the bush. The square timbers were skidded out, then driven down the Dumoine and Ottawa Rivers to the St. Lawrence and on to Quebec City. My grandfather was a jobber, and eventually built the Boucher Stopping Place. That's where I was raised – at the Boucher Stopping Place; it was a lovely place!

There were very few schools. I went to Pembroke and I got up to sixth grade there. My father and mother moved down there for a while after the stoppin' place. My grandmother took it over since we didn't want to leave the place by itself. We got some schooling in Pembroke, then came back to the stoppin' place, to look after it. Lot of stables to clean there in the winter!

We grew our own vegetables, and we had cattle and pigs. That

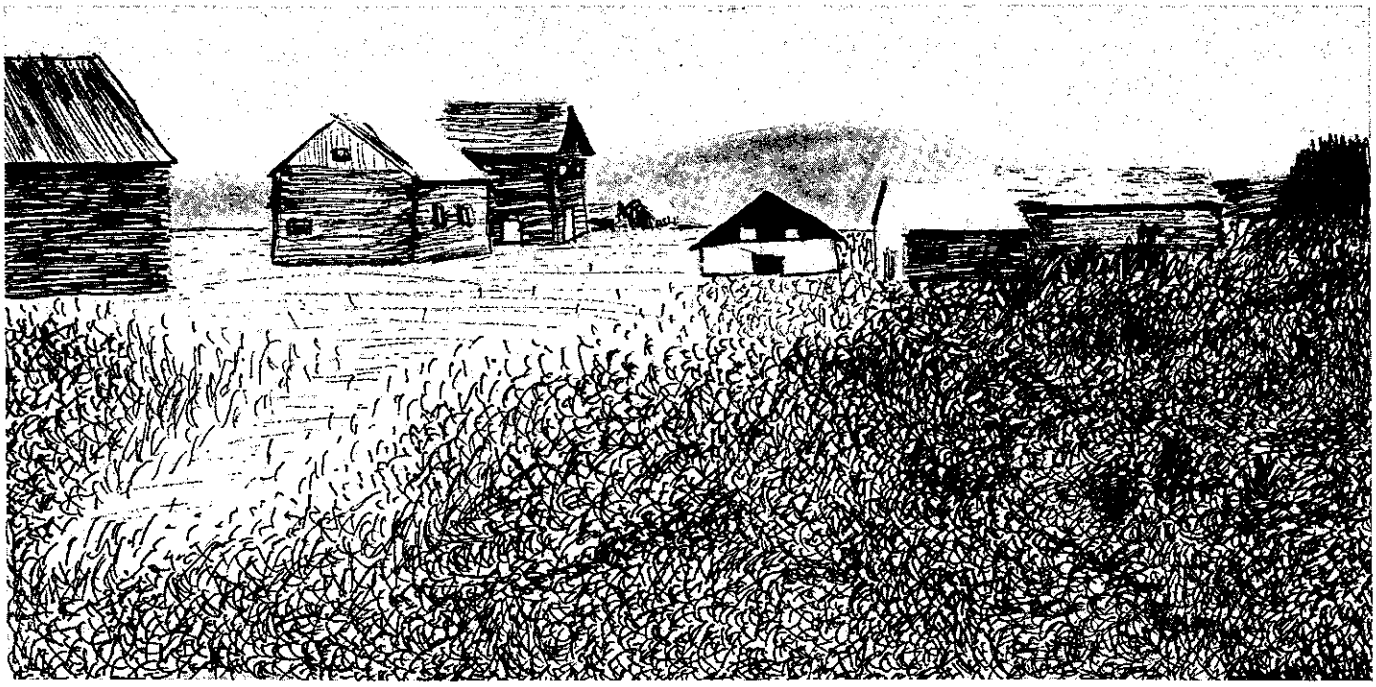
was one of my jobs, lookin' after the pigs. I got the task of lookin' after this great big boar. The farmers would get whoever had the best boar to breed his sows, eh! Same thing with the bulls. Prize bull, that's the boy that's gettin' all the joys! This good boar of ours got pretty tame. He got used to going to visit the sows. We'd put planks against the sleigh or wagon and he'd walk right up them into his box. Goin' for a holiday!

I didn't work away from home until I was in my early teens. I lived and passed my time right there at the stoppin' place. Soon as I was old enough, I spent my time fishing and hunting – having a good time!

There were quite a few stopping places all together. They were usually only five to ten miles apart. You know the horses could only travel half a day before you had to feed them and let them rest a bit! Most haulin' was done by sleigh. In the wintertime, the farmers from all around, they'd come and they'd haul all winter from Moore Lake Station to the Dumoine. Bob Lee was an agent for the companies. The companies would need certain things, they'd just talk to Bob! He would arrange to have them sent to Moore Lake by train and then delivered by sleigh. The haulers used to leave Moore Lake and come up to our place – the Boucher Place! They'd stay overnight. Sometimes the stables would be plugged tight! There were two stables of 12 teams and one stable of maybe 14 teams. Then there were other stalls in the barn. There could be 75 to 100 horses at the stoppin' place – they were just piled in. Sometimes there would even be some poor horses that would have to stay outside.

The lumber companies would pay my parents to feed their haulers. The other haulers (farmers) from, say Chapeau, Sheenboro or any of those little places in behind, they had their own food boxes, including hay and oats. Every second week, one of them would go back home to Sheenboro or wherever, and pick up food boxes for themselves and some of the other boys. They each had their turn to go down and get food. The lumber companies used to haul their own stuff from Moore Lake Station.

They'd start cuttin' early in



"The Boucher Stopping Place; it was a lovely place."

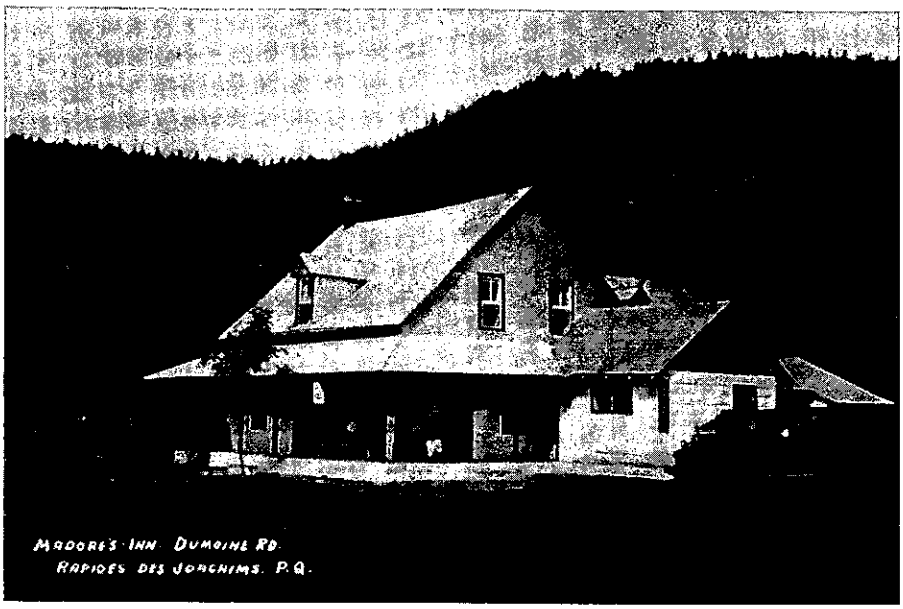
the fall and they'd cut right through until the snow got too deep, then they'd haul the logs to the River.

The log drivers would go up the Dumoine just as it was opening up in the spring. By the last of June the drive would be all over. The logs were all down to the Ottawa. Once the log drivers got the logs down the rapids here at Des Joachims, they were taken over by a company (ICO) that separated them and towed them down the River. There were different markings on the logs depending on the company that cut them. The markings were cut into the end of the logs with an axe. Some logs would go right down to Ottawa, others to Pembroke. At 17, I worked driving logs, starting around Buckshot Lake (now Brulart). Gee, that's one job I liked – drivin' logs! There was not much to do, you just watched the current! There were eight to nine men in a boat. Six guys rowing, one man in the bow and one in the stern. There was another man, usually a rookie called the 'rubber man'. When the logs went into the brush at the side of the river, you had to back your boat in there and the 'rubber man' would sink his pike pole into the log. Then the rowers would haul the log out to where the current could catch it. Many of the drivers were from around Des Joachims and the Dumoine River area. Anyone from around here was like a muskrat – could swim like anything. That's why we weren't afraid on the drives eh! You fell in, you got out of there! I went in a couple of times, but I didn't find it dangerous because I knew I could swim.

Accidents did happen and men drowned. In the early days, they used to bury them right there along the shore. They'd put a cross at the head of his grave, take his cork boots, tie them and hang his boots on the cross. I ran into some of these crosses as a child and young man along the Dumoine River. I used to go trappin' with my grandfather. He was a good old boy, and he looked after me! I saw one cross that had been put up quite a few years before; the soles were starting to fall off the boots. I asked my grandfather what happened. He told me that the fellow had drowned just down there in the creek below us. His crew had just hauled him up the knoll and buried him. They made a cross and put his boots up over top of the cross.

There could be 75 to 100 horses there – they were just piled in.

There were some big rapids on the Ottawa – Roche Capitain was one up near Bissetts. That's all drowned out now. They didn't run that too much. To take the boats over, they'd bring them up on shore, put them on a wagon or something and haul them over the portage. Here at Des Joachims, they'd let them down the rapids on a rope because the shore wasn't too rough. I've seen Des Joachims rapids run. An



Indian from here; he used to run it in a big, eight oar boat!

The boom in the Dumoine ended in the late 1920's. Then they started using bloomin' trucks eh! The stopping places died down about the same time

Selling all those Fullerbrushes helped with my schooling...

and the families moved out. There was nothing for them to do, unless they wanted to work for these Americans, as guides or something.

After 18 I got the hell out of there! I went up to Northern Temiskaming. From there I went up to Rouyn and then put in one year at Timmins. At Timmins I was selling Fullerbrush (brushes, cleaning agents, etc). I sold from Timmins through to Smooth Rock Falls – small places. I sold everything.

But God almighty, I learned trades along the way, eh! Selling all those Fullerbrushes helped with my schooling because I had to figure out prices and things. It didn't take me long to figure out anything! After that, I was in Sudbury doing bodywork. Then I put in about 35 years with Ontario Hydro. I moved around pretty fast! Be one place for a year, then move someplace else and be there for two years.

I was one of the first foremen to start work here for the Des Joachims dam in the early 1940's. Crews had to clear different places out so they could try and start building the dam. Clearing the land for the dam site construction was a big job.

They had a hell of a lot of men here – on the Quebec side and on the Ontario side. When the construction of the Des Joachims dam was going on, there was about 2500 people working for the Hydro. The superintendent on the Quebec side was Alex St. Amour. He was an old boy; I guess he was around 70. He told me one day, 'Reggie, we gotta get more men'. He says 'we have a lot of work to be done in the bush – like clearing roads and whatever. Now you haven't had much time being the foreman, but you are now going to have about nine foremen under you.' I can remember one piece of advice he gave me, 'After you get accustomed to your gang of men, take the best worker and put him in as a subforemen, but tell these subforemen that if they are one of those who push their men too much, you will fire them.' Alex didn't like the pushers. He said, 'No man is supposed to be pushed around in the bush or any job!' Oh Alex was a good ol' boy!

The Des Joachims Generating Station is located where the rapids used to be. Ontario Hydro dug right out where the rapids were. I was a foreman in there too. I ended up with one ear deaf and the other don't hear too much. All that blastin' and drillin'. We had those big Euclid trucks there, and bulldozers. Steady roarin'. And the deeper you went down, the louder the sound got.

During construction, the hotels in Des Joachims were very

Reggie, Emmeline and son in 1944

busy. Lots of excitement occurred there. There was a guy raised here named Bodie Meilleur. He was a fighting man, eh. Bodie worked for Hydro for a while, then he'd go in the bush and work there for a while. During the construction of the dam, the DPs (immigrants) –

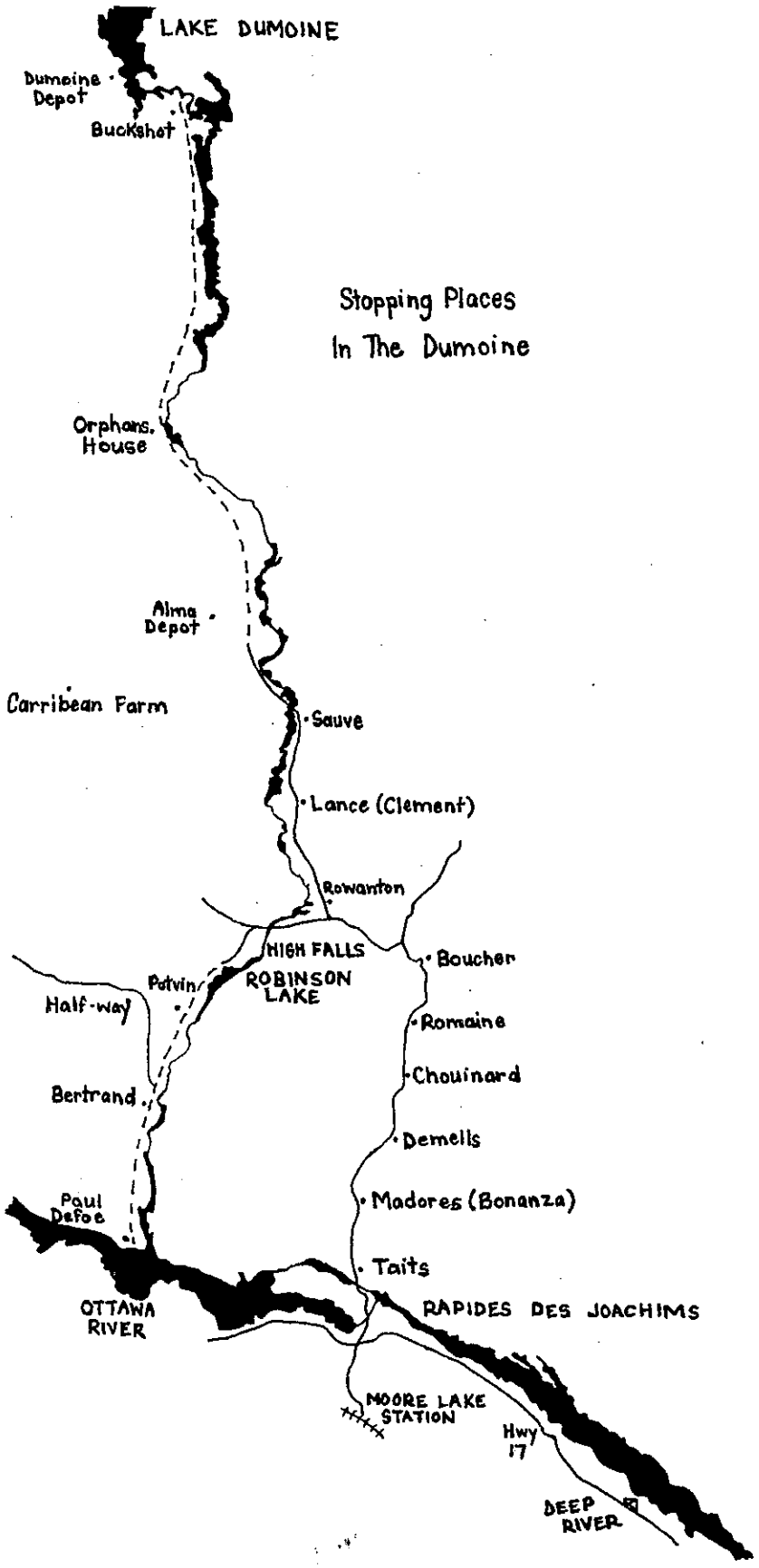
poor buggers, would come into Des Joachims on Saturday evening. They wouldn't stay in the hotels; they'd get their beer and go sit out somewhere along the roads. They'd make a smudge

The boom in the Dumoine ended in the late 1920's. Then they started using all those bloomin' trucks.

there to try and chase the flies away. Bodie would go down the road and he'd talk to them for a while. If they were nice guys he wouldn't bother them too much, but if they were lookin' for trouble, he'd look after them, then take their beer!"

Reggie has lived in Des Joachims for about 50 years. At one time he was mayor of the village. When asked to reflect on how the village has changed over the years he commented, "The village was not as big years ago as it is now. It didn't grow much at a time though, only a few kids a year. The hotels, they were booming!"

Even after a couple of hours of talking with Reggie, we felt that we had barely scratched the surface. He had so much more to tell; we had so much more to learn.



"Right from the start, business was good..."

We entered the room, which was comfortably decorated in deep, earthy tones and wood panelling. We immediately noticed the gun rack on the wall, and the photographs hanging between the high windows opposite the door. Mr. Cournoyer, relaxing in a beige recliner, told us to make ourselves at home.

Vern Cournoyer was born in 1912 in Tweed, Ontario. He moved out to Grey, Saskatchewan when he was two years old, and remained there until he was seven, before returning to the Tweed area. The second of 13 children, he lived in the Tweed area until 1936, when he moved to Sudbury to work for International Nickel. In the 1940's he married and had two children, Jacqueline and Anne Marie. Mr. Cournoyer moved to Point Alexander with his young family in 1949 to purchase the Byeways Lodge from Guy and Gladys Dawson. He built it into a profitable business, which he sold in the summer of 1968. After selling the Byeways, Mr. Cournoyer worked as a realtor, and is currently enjoying his retirement.

Mr. Vern Cournoyer

By Jennifer Young and Bradley Lance

"My grandfather's name was Felix Cournoyer, and there were two other Felix Cournoyers' in the Tweed area. One was a bootlegger and the other one didn't pay his bills. They'd get the mail mixed up. So I think my grandmother decided to change the spelling of the name, from Cournoyer to Courneya. That's the story I got anyway. There was a lot of red tape trying to get it changed back to Cournoyer, too!

One was a bootlegger, and the other didn't pay his bills.

When I was a babe in arms, my family moved out to Saskatchewan. My dad went out there building grain elevators, you know, working as a carpenter. He ended up in the village of Grey. Dad was such a handy guy around the place; he could butcher, cook, cut hair and file a saw.

Grey was a very small village and some of the other farmers got together and said to my dad, 'We need a restaurant here in town. Some place where we can gather, since we don't have anything.' They came to my dad and asked him if he was interested in starting one. My dad said, 'I don't have any money. What I earned on this trip is only a few hundred dollars.' So the famers took him down to the lumber dealer in town and arranged for credit. Then they helped him build a two story building. We lived up above, and had a pool room, barber shop, and lunch counter down below. Besides running that business, I can remember him going out at midnight to butcher a beef. He worked around the clock, I guess. Anyway, in 18 months he had the place paid for.

I remember this chap who delivered papers out in Saskatchewan. He used to ride his horse full out up and down the road – something like a guy on a motorcycle these days. We were still out there when the First World War finished, and I remember the horse wheeled around in the yard and the chap threw the newspaper with the headline 'The War is Over.'

Back in Tweed, the farm next door to my grandfather was for

sale (a relative had died), so dad's parents, they contacted us and said, 'You'd better come home, everybody's dying from the flu.' So we came back to Tweed and bought the farm. There were an awful lot of deaths with the flu epidemic in the early 20's. Everyone in the neighbourhood would take a turn going around in the wintertime to see that people had fires on, and that they could look after themselves. If the guy that was designated to call on certain people didn't show up, they knew he was sick and somebody else would fill in. All our family, except for me, got the flu. My dad was mothering the whole bunch of them.

My last years of high school were in Tamworth. I worked part time for the doctor, driving him around at night. The doctor worked hard, and often never went to bed at all. In the wintertime we'd drive with two sets of chains on the wheels, and carry a couple of shovels. If we couldn't get through the snow, we'd walk to the next farmer and he'd pull us out with his horses. But I don't think the doctor got paid half the time! That discouraged me from becoming a doctor. So I forged a note to my teacher saying I didn't have to take Latin. My dad got my report at Christmas time and there was no Latin in it. He said, 'You might as well bring your books home and go to work.' Which I did! I went to work for my dad in the garage of his Ford dealership.

I went to work for International Nickel up in Sudbury in 1936, and stayed there until 1945, when my dad took a stroke. My mother contacted me and said, 'You gotta come home, your dad's in the hospital.' I sold my house in Sudbury and went back to Tamworth. After a couple of weeks dad was out of the hospital, but I guess they thought he would never work again.

I bought my first hotel right after the Second World War. I didn't have enough money, so with my brother Ted, we bought a hotel in Northbrook, Ontario. It grew to be a real good business.

My brother and I might hvae been able to get along, but our wives couldn't.

But when Ted finally got out of the Air Force and came home, the hotel was really too small for the both of us. He and his wife had just had a baby, and I already had two children. So we decided on a price for the hotel, flipped a coin, and Ted bought me out. My brother and I might have been able to get along, but our wives couldn't.

I then bought a hotel in Elgin, Ontario, but sold it after only a couple of years. That was enough for me; I didn't want to see another hotel! But, after only two months out of the business, I looked all over the place to buy another hotel. I ended up buying Byeways.

When I first came to Deep River, AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) was building many houses – maybe 100 at a time. The population was increasing rapidly. The highway was paved as far as Deep River. From there west it was just crushed gravel. Ontario Hydro was building the Des Joachims dam at the time (locally known as Swisha), so my hotel business

The Byeways Lodge circa 1950

was good. I guess I foresaw that; all these construction workers here. There were no other hotels but Swisha, and of course the Chalk River Hotel. There was nothing in Deep River.

The Byeways wasn't as big as it is now, but it had a licence to sell beer and wine in the dining room. I built a beverage room onto it, and had to get a licence for the cocktail bar. Right from the start, business was good. But then the Diplomat Hotel and the Deep River Legion opened, and I lost a lot of business. I figured the only thing I could do to increase business would be to improve my food operation. I got a good chef by the name of John Leroux, and in no time at all business improved.

I had a fairly good supply of beer when the beer strike came in 1968. But it gradually dwindled down, and there was none left. So I started buying beer in Quebec, probably 100 cases at a time. This was not completely legal - you were supposed to buy

I had a fairly good supply of beer when the beer strike came...

your beer through the Government of Ontario. It was getting obvious that I had a source of beer; the strike had gone on a long time and I still had beer. I went over to Quebec this one time - took all the empties over and I said, 'Well Fred, I'm a little leary of this, I'm not gonna take anymore.'

'Well,' he says, 'your opposition just left here a half hour ago with a load.'

I said 'Load her up!' They were all doing it, even the Deep River Golf Club. I got word one day that the Byeways was gonna be searched, someone tipped me off. Instead of just taking the beer and getting rid of it, I took all 77 full cases, put them in the basement, and piled a bunch of empties in front. I thought I hid them safe, but the police found them. I could have taken that damn beer and moved it to a shed across the highway, nothin' to it. But I didn't. Well, the police took the beer. I was afraid of losing my hotel licence over it. So I contacted the top man at the Liquor Licence Board and asked 'Am I in real trouble now?'

He said 'Oh, don't worry about it. That's just a misdemeanor.'

My children went to public school before we came to Point Alexander. There was a good separate school in Deep River, so I thought, what the hell, maybe I can get them in. There was a little opposition from the people of the Town of Deep River at the time. They didn't want me to put my kids in the school since we didn't live in town - they figured we weren't good enough for them. They wouldn't take my children at first, so I went and talked to Father McElligott, the parish priest then.

He said, 'I'll look after it. Ves Walker here will sell you a lot in town, and then you'll be a

We didn't live in town, and they figured we weren't good enough for them.

taxpayer and they can't refuse you.'

So Ves sold me an acre of land where Beaver Lumber is now, for a thousand dollars. They had to accept me - now I was a taxpayer in Deep River.

When I first bought the Byeways there was no electricity. I had a little gas power plant. Ontario Hydro was supposed to put in the power, but then I found out they were going to postpone it for two more years. They said other areas needed it more. At that time Jake Stewart had real power politically so I told him about it. He said 'Let's go to Toronto to see about it.'

We went in Jake's car to the big shot's office at Ontario Hydro in Toronto - to the man in charge of rural construction. Jake didn't drink, but he brought a bottle of scotch. The first thing he did was set the bottle of scotch down on the desk. The guy grabbed it right away and put it in his desk. All we talked about really was what Jake and I were there for - and about fishing and

hunting. Finally the guy said 'Jake, we'll start putting the power lines in right away.'

In a couple of weeks the power lines were in. Jake knew how to work these things!

...the first thing he did was set the bottle of scotch down on the desk.

Jake Stewart. He was a great guy! I enjoyed his stories. But God, I wish I could remember them all! I remember one ...

A guy from the Ministry of Forestry from Toronto was up here – something about a timber lease. He and Jake were out in the bush near the park line. I guess it was fall - you could see where the squirrels were hiding nuts and piling leaves on top of the nuts.

'What's that?' asked the Ministry guy pointing to the big pile of leaves.

Jake said 'That's from my dogs. They're trained. They're not supposed to cross that park line. After they come to the park line they brace their feet to stop and shove the leaves up into a big pile like that.'

Another story Jake told me was about making tea for the Ministry guy. Anyway, Jake got to making the tea. When the man turned to look at the tea, Jake picked up a handful of rabbit droppings and made it look like he threw them into the tea (he didn't really). Jake told him, 'That just makes the tea taste good!' The guy drank it, but he didn't look like he wanted to.

Jake told us another one about a lumber camp. Every winter, these two preachers would land at the camp. Everytime they came, the boss made some men give up their bunks, so the lumberjacks didn't like them very much. A few of them lads were pretty lousy with lice. So they got all their undershirts and picked the lice out of their shirts. When the preachers fell asleep, they sprinkled the lice on their beds. When they got up in the morning the preachers were scratching themselves so hard they ripped themselves apart and never came back.

I have served on township council and have been active in the local political scene. I suggested to Garnet Allen, reeve of the township at the time, that Guy duManoir would make a good reeve, which he was for many years. I was also a voting delegate when Bill Davis was elected Premier of Ontario. Politically, over my lifetime I have voted for all three major parties; I tended to vote for the man, not the party.

I have enjoyed my life in Deep River, and have tried to be a good citizen."

L - R: Len Hopkins, Guy duManoir, Vern Cournoyer, and Joe Green ; Vaucour Lake 1965

"I've enjoyed growing up and growing older in Renfrew."

Agnes Lockwood, born Agnes Fishenden, welcomes us into her modern house on the banks of Smith's Creek in Renfrew. She mentions later that it was a house she had always imagined building and living in since she was a small girl. Inside, it is decorated with art and pottery made by local artisans. Agnes and her husband, Jack, are friendly and easy to talk to. Both born and raised in Renfrew, they have known each other since childhood. Agnes, smiling easily, tells us about her early days in Renfrew. Her stories of the depression, World War II, her father's hockey career and the various local characters she has known in her lifetime, paint a vivid picture of what it was like to be young in "the good old days".

Agnes and her husband Jack

By Steve Tatone and Janet Ungrin

"Renfrew, through all the years has had it's ups and downs. It comes alive for a while, and then it has its bad times. But there always seems to be a very strong nucleus of people who promote Renfrew and keep it thriving.

My father (Tom Fishenden) was brought to Renfrew to play hockey in 1908. I've been very happy that he came because I've enjoyed growing up and growing older in Renfrew. He played for the Renfrew Rivers before I was born. They were here as a non-professional team at the same time as the Millionaires (Renfrew NHL Team). I heard many hockey stories as a child.

A hockey story that I am proud of, happened one night when the Senators from Ottawa were to come up to play the Millionaires. There was a bad storm, and the Senators couldn't make it. So the Millionaires called on the Rivers to come and play an exhibition game. Of course, the Rivers beat the Millionaires!

...Turk Broda and some of the Toronto Maple Leafs were soldiers at Petawawa during World War II

Another story was when the Rivers went to Pittsburg for the big opening of what was known as Duquesne Gardens. Mary Pickford, she was a very famous actress back then, was there, and she skated with all the hockey players.

Another interesting hockey fact is that Turk Broda (three time NHL all star goalie) and some of the Toronto Maple Leafs were soldiers at Petawawa during

The Renfrew Rivers hockey team circa 1912-13

World War II. I can remember going to see a game with Turk Broda in the nets for Petawawa when they were playing against Renfrew. That was something big in hockey for Renfrew and Petawawa!

Growing up, I was always interested in all kinds of sports. My dad's philosophy was to be a good sport and play the game.

I guess my main interest, sports-wise, was skiing. Renfrew always had a ski club. When we were in high school we used to go out to the hill every Saturday. We would take cans of beans or scalloped potatoes our mothers would make, and have our supper after skiing. The Senior Ski Club always went on Sundays and had their supper meeting.

We had a lot of baseball when I was in my elementary school years. The town brought in some professional baseball players to play with some of the local ones. I remember there was the 'knothole' club. To get a 'knothole' season ticket was ten or twenty-five cents; that allowed you to go to all the games. All the kids in town were anxious for their parents to be interested in, and belong to this 'knothole' club, so they could go watch baseball.

I guess some of the fun times in high school were our trips to Pembroke to play basketball. We didn't have buses, and people didn't run back and forth in cars the same as today. We took a local train which ran between Pembroke and Ottawa, and stopped in Renfrew. We would go up to Pembroke on the train the Friday nights that we played basketball. We had our games and our fun, but we had to wait until quite late to come home. We came home on the midnight Trans-Canada train and it was maybe two o'clock in the morning when we got in. That was really fun on the coach coming back!

In our younger years we did a lot of sliding and tobogganing in the winter and had picnics in the summer. We'd more or less travel as a gang; everybody together. Sometimes you'd pair off a little bit. On a weekend we'd go to what used to be Nick's or Haramis's Restaurant. That was sort of the hangout. From there we'd probably end up going to someone's house and playing pool or listening to music or the radio. We were usually at somebody's house in time for 'The Shadow' (the radio show).

I think I was rather spoiled because I didn't have many chores. I had to dust on Saturday mornings and help with the dishes a bit, that was all. There was just my brother and me, and my mother, I imagine, wanted to do things herself.

They often talk of the 'dirty thirties', but we weren't too aware of the depression. I guess my parents were pretty good managers, especially my mom. My father always had a job and we were a happy family.

I went to high school in the midst of the war...

During the depression, a lot of transients would come through; we called them bums.

Some of them were nice though. They'd come to the door to get something to eat and our mothers usually had a sandwich for them. I can remember one fellow who my mother gave something to eat. He came back a couple of days later and brought a little ring for me. It was fine wire and he had beaded it. Mother was kind to him and he appreciated it. I think there isn't the same trust with people today. I guess it's because things are so different.

Princess Elizabeth Club circa 1940-42
Agnes is third from the right in the back row

As far as manufacturing went, Mr. O'Brien, Senator O'Brien, had a lot of industries in town. He owned big woolen mills that employed a lot of people. The wool industry, in the early years, was a pretty big part of the town.

Jack and I didn't have to have everything when we started out on our own. I think that was sort of the fun of making do and learning to be a little more content. Then as years went on, things got better.

The place where I went to public school was right where the liquor store is now. It was called Central Public School and it was two stories high. I went there from kindergarten to grade eight, which was known as the entrance class.

I went to high school in the midst of the war (World War II) because I was in what we called third form, which was grade eleven, when war was declared. For the next couple of years it was pretty tough, with all the older fellows that left. At our assembly every morning the principal would mention those that were lost, and we would sing patriotic songs. That was a pretty traumatic time in our growing up.

When we were in about grade twelve, there were about a dozen of us girls who thought we should do something for the war effort. We became known as the Princess Elizabeth Club. The main thing we were supposed to be doing was knitting for the Red Cross. Another thing we did was canvass for funds, and help the Lions Club out with the carnival; that type of thing. Every Wednesday after school we would go to each others house and have a lovely tea party that our mothers would prepare. I think that getting together was more important than our war effort, because our mothers did most of the knitting.

There were a number of interesting characters in Renfrew that I met over the years. In my church, we had an old minister who was known as Canon Quartermaine. He was actually the minister in our parish for 50 years. I had him as my Sunday school teacher and he was minister right up until three years before Jack and I were married. This old Canon Quartermaine was very, very English and he was a character, I tell you. I actually have a beautiful letter from him. He had retired and was living at the hotel in Renfrew. He wrote a letter congratulating me when he heard that we were being married. It's a beautiful letter; it's written in old Victorian english.

He'd tap on the window with his crop, and expect a glass of sherry

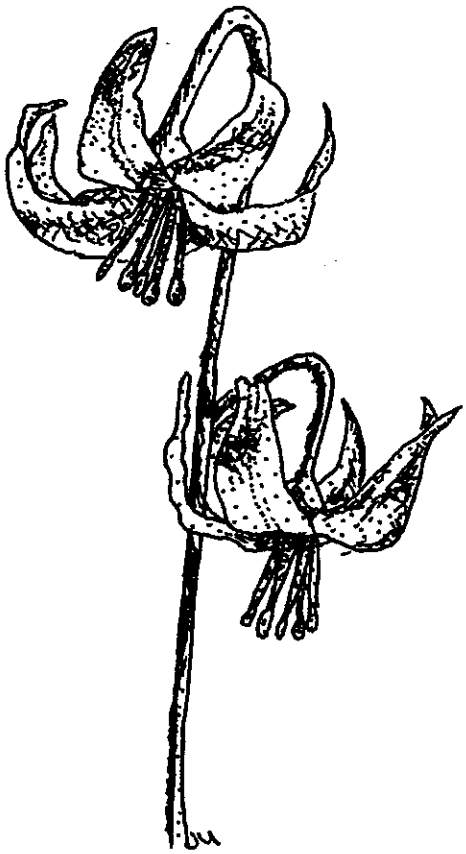
Another character was the high school janitor we had. He was a little tiny Englishman, but he had a voice! He was just a

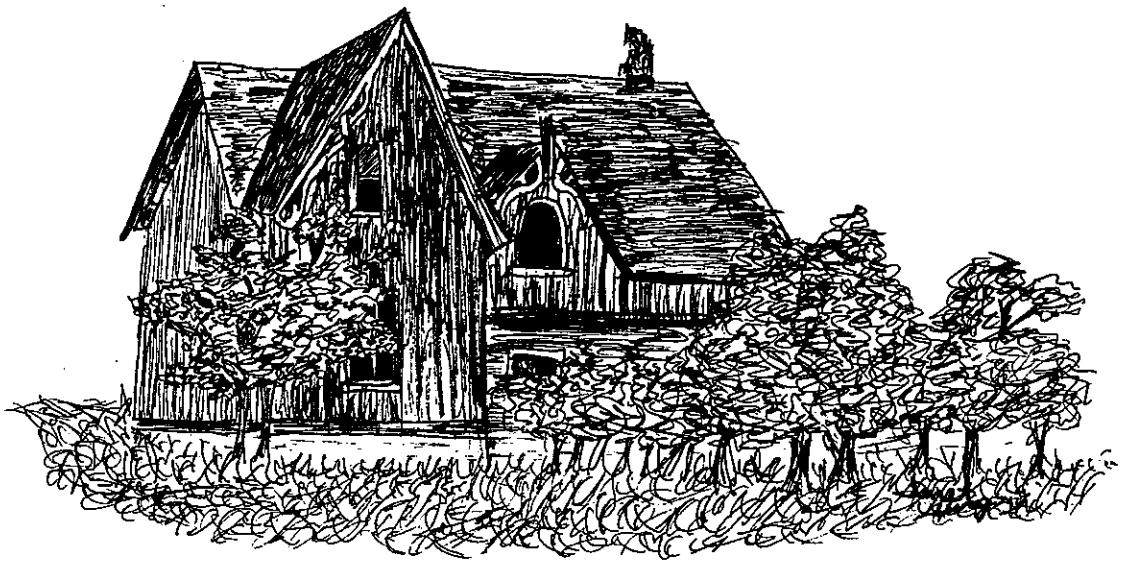
janitor but when he spoke, everybody listened!

Then there was this little man who, every Christmas morning, would ride around on his huge horse and go up to the windows of houses. He'd tap on the window with his crop, and expect a glass of sherry. Of course, by the end of Christmas afternoon he was usually slightly iniebriated. The horse knew it's way back home but I guess there was one time that the man fell off on the way. About 15 minutes after they had stopped at our house, the horse came back on its own. A little while later along came the man all covered with mud; the horse had thrown him!

In 1981, it was Renfrew Collegiate's hundredth year. I was on the committee and my job was planning the entertainment. Each decade presented something and the 'Forties' was particularly good. I was more involved with it than with the other decades because it was 'our' decade. Jack Zimmerman, a fellow who was a year ahead of me in high school and now works in TV advertising, came up with a summary of the 'Forties'. I found that was a very exciting thing to be involved with and it showed the changes in the high school through the years.

I'm happy to be able to still be involved in things. I guess I was always a very optimistic person and I feel very, very thankful that I've been able to have the life and the health that I do have."





"It was long hours, but we enjoyed every minute of it!"

We approached the Stewart's neat bungalow, on Glendale Ave. in Deep River, with feelings of apprehension and excitement. The door opened and we were greeted by a cheery Mel Stewart, instantly putting our worries to rest. Stepping inside we were further welcomed by his wife, Margaret, who we had seen smiling from the window.

L–R: Nicole, Mel, Margaret, Seamus

The Stewarts have lived in town since 1975, when they moved from Meilleur's Bay. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stewart's families have been in the area since the late 1800's. Mel's father, Jake Stewart, was prominent in lumbering throughout the Valley. Mel followed in his footsteps, working in the bush and running a guiding camp for the various hunters and fishermen that came by. His amazing recollection of his time spent in the bush, coupled with Mrs. Stewart's touching memories of her family, enthralled us for hours..

By Seamus Frew and Nicole Carlucci

"Both my grandfather and grandmother on my dad's side came from Antrim, Ireland," Mel began. "My grandfather homesteaded down on the military grounds (CFB Petawawa) in the 1890's. In 1910 land buyers offered the people, who owned the land where the base is, a certain amount of money for their land; they were buying it for the Crown. Later they came back and said that the King wouldn't pay that much money; he'd pay only this much (less). They'd a scheme game goin' there. The buyers were trying to pay the people off at their own lower price and collect off the government at the high price. Well my grandfather wouldn't take it. He got into three or four fights with them and they finally sent the sheriff up. Grandfather hit the sheriff. They brought him to court and the judge said, 'Mr. Stewart, did you hit Sheriff Dickens?' My grandfather said, 'yeah'. The judge said, 'How hard?' and my grandfather said, 'Just like this'... and he hit him again."

"My dad was born up at Meilleur's Bay and my mother came from Eganville," Margaret adds. "I was born in October 1924, at Rapides des Joachims. My great grandmother and a woman by the name of Mrs.

Bertrand brought me into the world and did the same when my brother was born. Later my mother got ill and died. My dad's parents took us, and raised us along with seven of their own children. They were like brothers and sisters to us, that was all that we had. We never even called our grandparents grandma and grandpa 'til we had our own kids; it was always Mom and Dad. We lived on, what they now call, McKinley Road. Grandpa worked in the bush and fire-ranged in the summer."

I worked the bush for the best and worst part of my life.

"I was born in Chalk River, November 1920, but I spent all of my early life just up on Allan Road, in a brick house owned by my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Stewart," Mel interjects.

"I worked the bush for the best and worst part of my life, from about '36 'til '52. I did everything except drive horses. When we first started in the bush, in my time, we loaded logs with a decking line; that's a quarter-inch chain about a hundred feet long with a little swamp hook on the end of it. I was in the bush a little bit with trucks, but mostly when we used horses. I didn't like trucks, that was my opinion anyway. It took as many horses to pull the trucks around in the morning just trying to get them started.

Usually you'd go in to set up the lumber camp about August. You built the cookery first, and slept there until you got the bunkhouse up. Then you built a stable for the horses and the blacksmith shop. The first camp I was in the bunks were all 'muzzleloaders'. They called them that because the only way you could get in them was from the front. You put tar paper, hay and blankets if you had any, on your bunk; that was your bed. Usually there couldn't be more than fifty men in one bunkhouse. If you had over fifty men you had two bunkhouses and a washroom at the back of the two. There were mostly men in the camp but sometimes the cook had his wife helping him. There were two bull cooks; they cut the wood and carried water for the bunkhouse and cookery. Then they had a corral dog, who was the barn boss; he looked after the feed for the horses.

To keep your crew working there were two log cutters, two skidders, and a roller. The log cutters cut and limbed for the skidders. We worked six days a week, not Sundays. The lights in the bunkhouse were out at nine o'clock weeknights, ten o'clock Saturday night. Sometimes somebody would play a violin and we'd stepdance. Sunday was washday and we boiled the clothes in a big cast iron pot outside. A lot of the time you got home around every second weekend. We walked seven or eight miles each way to get home.

We were lucky for a good number of years, we had good cooks that's for sure! That's what made the lumber camp. You had cooks, and then there was 'stomach robbers'. They didn't cook good food! My dad, my brothers and I always put good food on the table. The Consolidated Paper Corporation, near us, didn't keep good food. They fed the men all these pig faces – the cheeks and the heads off of pigs. There would only be a little wedge-shaped piece of lean meat to eat. They thought they were saving money.

We used to get some supplies from Dover's store in Chalk River, for the camps. You didn't keep food cold then, you kept it dry. You bought salted, dry meat. Years ago, the first year we had a camp, we had to buy salt pork by the barrel. That was the whole pig, cut up and put in the barrel. Sometimes you'd go right across the River and build a root house. That's a hole in the bank with logs in the bottom, covered up with sand to keep your vegetables from freezing.

You had cooks, and then there was 'stomach robbers.'

Some men would never come out of the bush 'til June,

Mel and Margaret Stewart

sometimes July. The men would be out of the bush for a month and they'd have no money. They'd just go and get drunk, throwing their money away. It was hard work, but you ate good.

Just behind Guy DuManoir's Esso Station in Point Alexander, there was an old log school house; that's where I started school. The newer school where Guy DuManoir lives now; that's where I finished off. It was a one room school with eight grades and one teacher. We had around 35 students in there."

Margaret adds, "Sometimes more, I think at one time we had 40 or 45."

"Roads weren't plowed then," Mel reminds us.

"No, we had to walk to school," Margaret agrees. "Well from our place, on McKinley Road, to school, it was close to three miles. We had to plug our way through the snow. We had an old horse and once in a while my Aunt Edith would get in the cutter and take us to school."

"If the snow got too deep, you'd go on your hands and knees," Mel interjects with a smile. "We'd have the strap at school, I got it lots," He continued, still smiling.

"I tried to get it a few times too," adds Margaret, laughing.

"I was doing somethings I wasn't supposed to," Mel explained. "Going into school with a snake in my pocket and scaring somebody, or, tying somebody to their seat."

"You didn't tattle on one another either," Margaret remarked.

"We'd take a trimmin', you'd get a beating," Mel agreed.

"I got to grade eight," Margaret went on. "I wanted to go to high school and be a teacher because my mother was one, but I never got there. My grandparents couldn't afford it. Well I kept preaching to my kids, 'You have a chance now, take it.' I wish I'd had it."

"I wanted to study medicine but I couldn't. I had to quit school in '34 in the midst of the depression." explains Mel.

"First job I had, that paid any money, I worked for a couple of months over at Fraser's Depot. I made 36 dollars and some cents. I went to Pembroke and bought a four-piece suit, I can remember this yet – two pairs of pants, a vest, and a coat for $19.95.

I was driving when I was 12 years old. You couldn't get a license 'til you were 16. I drove a truck hauling pulp and wood to Pembroke when I was 14 – no license at all.

"Mel's family was the only family that we used to go and play with," Margaret adds. "We all went to school together. We went together 10 years before we were married. We got married in 1950, had our reception up at the Stewart house on Meilleur's Bay."

"It would be a big thing going to the show in Pembroke, cost 20 cents," Mel commented. "The first show I went to was silent. It was in the 20's, at the O'Brien theatre. They put sound in during the 30's. "

"First show I ever went to," Margaret continues, "was when my aunt and I went down for a walk to the Byeway's. Coming back we met Mel's two sisters going to the show. They asked us if we wanted to go. We thought for a little while but I'd never been to a show before, and I was 16. I knew if we went we'd be grounded because my grandmother would've been mad at us.

We went anyways though and we were grounded all right!

We had to make our own fun then. We had hills on both sides of our place. In the wintertime we'd take aluminum plates and if it was icy enough, we'd sit on them and go down one side and up the other. In the summer, we'd walk from our place up to where NPD (Nuclear Power Demonstration) is, picking blueberries. We'd come back with these big pails of blueberries and then come home and do our chores. Milk our cows and put everything through a separator to get our cream. We made our own butter and jam. Picking blueberries was a great big day for us because there was nothing else to do. You know there was no TV; I think we had a radio."

Mel continues, "First radio that came into the area my dad bought. It ran off of five or six batteries and there was a big horn on it. It had 15 dials that you had to get all tuned up. There was an old lad who was here one time when we picked up a Chicago station. Someone 'on the outside was talking; he couldn't believe that. We weren't gonna fool him! He got so mad, he picked up his lantern and went home.

I drove a truck hauling pulp and wood to Pembroke when I was 14 – no licence at all.

The Ottawa Valley Inn at Meilleur's Bay owned and operated by the Stewart family

Hydro (Ontario Hydro) started their preliminaries here about '41 or '42. They came back and started surveys here in '44. They really started the Hydro dam, up here, in '45. Hydro was welcome here; they created a lot of work all over the area. We (the Stewarts) cleared the area above Swisha and supplied Hydro with crib timber. We did a lot of clearing in 1950, down at Chenaux. We were paid by the acre to clear land. We also took over building the road going out to the transmission line in Rolphton."

Margaret went on, "When Hydro was here, I worked with two of Mel's sisters cooking at the Stewart's transit camp. We'd get up in the morning and get the fishermen out at maybe five o'clock. Friday night we'd have a dance from eight or nine 'til one."

"Margaret was good but I never was much of a dancer," Mel adds.

"So then we'd have to clean up and get everything ready for the people coming in the next morning. You wouldn't get to bed 'til maybe one o'clock."

"I started guiding in the 30's before the war. We used to have 46 deer hunters. In the 40's, we got as many as 80. I used to guide fishermen in the summer months. If it took from six o'clock in the morning 'til midnight to get them some fish, that's what they wanted." Mel finished.

"Well if they were leaving at six, we'd have to be up at five to make them their breakfast." Margaret explained. "It was long hours, but we enjoyed every minute of it. We were young and we could take it.

"We guided a lot of people," Mel continued. "Some years we had lots of New Yorkers and lots

from Ohio too. The last years we were guiding we'd get them all from Pennsylvania. Americans were more for fishing, Canadians were for hunting. We leased land across the River. There's a couple lakes that we stocked on the Quebec side as well. I used to carry the stuff in for two or three men, to last them several days,

You know the hardest people to guide were our own Canadians.

on my back; worked 17 or 18 hours a day. Some of them didn't know enough to get themselves out of the bush. You know the hardest people to guide were our own Canadians. I hate to say that, but they wanted so much for nothing. They think they know how to fish. A lot of Canadians that go in trout fishing bring all pike or bass lures. We built the camp on a lease in Quebec in 1961. It's still there and I still go up."

"But you have to fish hard to get them now," Margaret puts in. "We made an awful lot of good friends with that little business we had up there."

"After that," Mel continued, "I worked for Atomic Energy (Atomic Energy of Canada Limited – AECL), burning metal. Atomic Energy started here about '45. They hauled men to work there from Pembroke in what they used to call a cattle car. It was an old tin trailer with a wood stove in it for heat. They started to plough the highway in the 40's and there was black-top on it in the early 50's. The original highway used to come right into Chalk River. If you drove to Pembroke in an hour and a half, you were driving too fast.

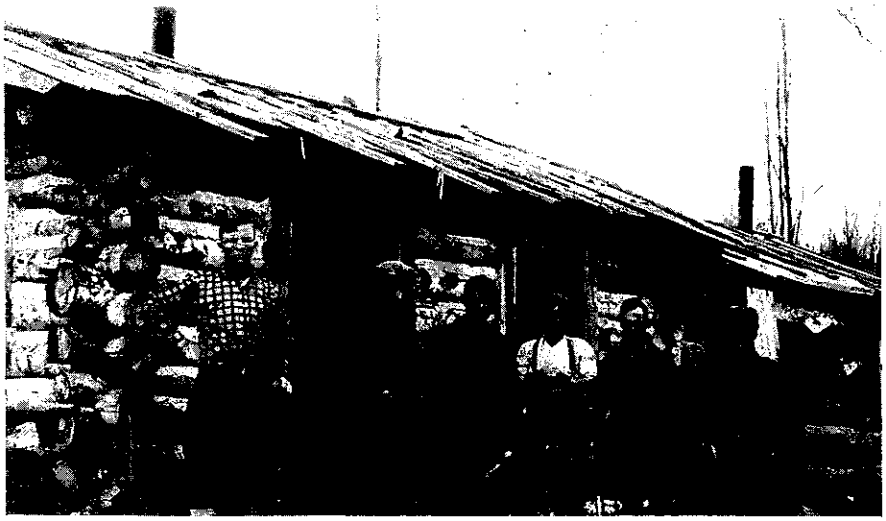
When they started to build at Atomic Energy, they started to build here in Deep River. Our house, here, was moved from Nobel, near Parry Sound. Some land AECL bought out, some they just expropriated. They didn't pay very much either.

The first medical treatment place Deep River had, was the house next door to us. They had

We made an awful lot of good friends with that little business we had up there.

the theatre here after I went to work for Atomic Energy and I guess A&P was the first grocery store. AECL had a gate up where the four-way stop is on Deep River Road. They had a guard on 24 hours a day. If you didn't work for Atomic Energy, you couldn't get into town for a long time. We'd go down to Dover's General Store in Chalk River to shop.

A lot of people got work when AECL came. But nobody knew for a couple of years what they were doing down there. It was the general opinion that they were making bombs. We were also told that the abundant supply of cold water to cool the reactors, was why AECL chose this area.



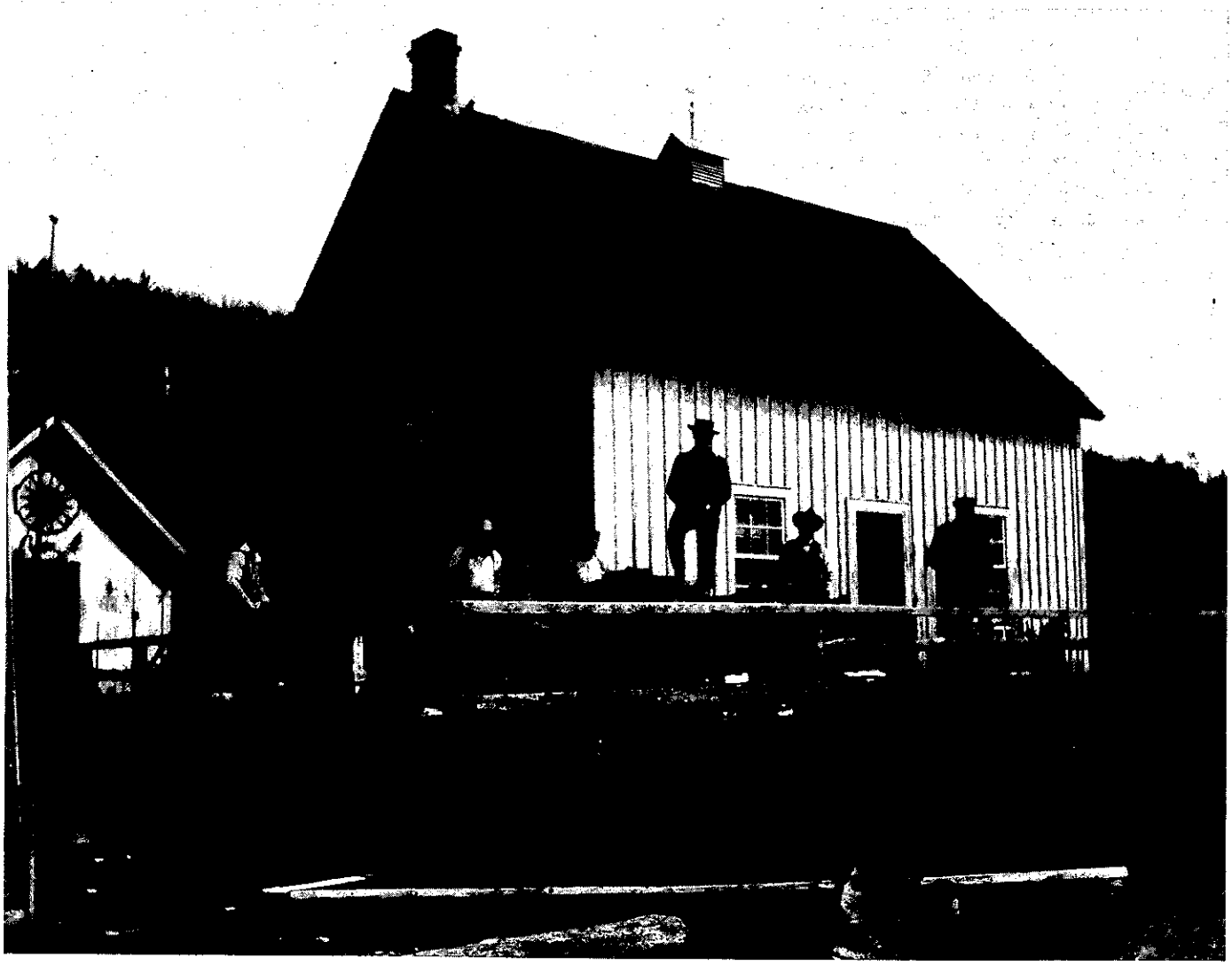
Moose hunting trip 1928, McGillvary Creek in Rolph Township. L - R: Johnny Rabishaw, Andrew Dole, Garnet Allen, George Young, Robert Rabishaw Sr., Jake Stewart, and Robert (Hobbs) Rabishaw

Now that's what we were told then, but I don't know what the truth is.

I was 65 on the 20th of November, 1985 and I was finished at Atomic Energy on the 19th. I wasn't happy to retire, I would have liked to work another three or four years."

Mel, in his free time, shovels snow and rakes leaves for the older people on his street that are unable to do so. Margaret likes being in town where everything is within walking distance but Mel often returns to his old fishing camp in the bush. Although they both enjoy fishing and hunting they don't do nearly as much as they used to.

We left the Stewart home feeling uplifted, our pockets bulging with Mrs. Stewart's homemade donuts. Since then we have returned several times, reminiscing about the old days and discussing the present.

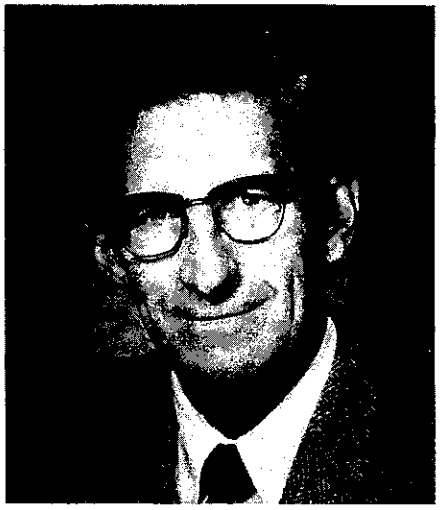


The Boom House on the Ottawa River downstream from Des Joachims (1908)

"It was all part of the area's make-up."

We walked miles to school, uphill both ways. They never ploughed the roads, but we still went; through rain, sleet, wind, cold... Unlike countless generations telling horror stories about school or life, Mr. Ernie Boudreau of Mackey did everything but flat out praise his past. He seemed genuinely content with how his life has gone so far and when asked, "Would you change anything if you could go back?", he always says no!

By Amanda St. Amand and Andrea Ghent



Ernie Boudreau

"Going to school was different than it is now. Very few children went beyond grade eight, or senior four, because there were no high schools in this area at all. You would have to go to Pembroke and you'd have to pay for boarding too. People just didn't have the money to do that. Very few of the children missed school. It was part of the areas make-up; they wanted to get there. Everybody walked so my family was lucky in that we were only about a mile from the school. If it was windy, you walked facing the wind until you got too cold, then you'd turn around and walk backwards for awhile, then you'd turn around and face the wind again. We had a furnace in the basement of our schoolhouse. It wasn't real warm, mind you, but warm enough. There were no P.A. days; we went five days a week, except for maybe Easter or Christmas. We would be off between Christmas and New Years.

If we were bad in school we'd get the strap. Maybe one wallop, maybe two. I got it probably once a week, and I wasn't real bad. Some got it more often. We got it for not a real heavy reason either – like talking in school when you weren't supposed to. The girls were as bad as we were, maybe worse! They'd be the instigators. I got a few beatings at school by other chaps. I wasn't a big strong guy but I guess I talked too much and sometimes opened my mouth when I shouldn't have. But that was life! In church we used to

The girls were as bad as we were, maybe worse! They'd be the instigators.

serve on the altar for Father Drohan who was our parish priest. He was a cross old fellah; if we weren't up to snuff doing things, it was nothing for him to give our ears a good twist.

When I was young most women would go to Pembroke to give birth but a lot of them had their children right here. We had several ladies who would deliver babies. When a lady went to Pembroke to have her baby, she wouldn't stay for very long. She left here just shortly before the baby was to be born, stayed there for a couple of days and then came back. But a doctor could be called in from Pembroke if there were problems here. The odd time the doctor would come up here, but transportation was poor and in the wintertime the road wasn't ploughed. He would have to come by train; the train would arrive at Mackey from Pembroke about seven o'clock in the morning, and the next one to carry passengers would go down at 11 o'clock at night. If the doctor came up, he would have to stay

all day.

Some of my fondest memories are of when I got my first little red wagon or a nice new sleigh as a youngster. Toys weren't easy to come by and you cherished them. In the wintertime I used to slide at night with my friends in the moonlight. We skied on old barrel staves; we'd just strap them onto our feet and ski, no poles or anything. We'd play ball and hockey and slide, hunt and fish together. Sunday was our day to play because other times we would be doing odds and ends for our parents.

Most women, like my mother, helped with chores. Mom always did the washing. She made our own soap. She mixed together pork fat, ashes and lye, I think."

Mary Ellen added, "My father wore woollen longjohns. Summer and Winter. My mother used to have to wash those on the washboard. Holy, that was hard work!"

Ernie grinned and continued, "The women had enough work to do cooking, baking, cleaning, and they did everything by hand. My dad was away a lot when we were young so my mother had that much more responsibility. Dad worked away in the bush as much as he could to supplement whatever we could provide on the farm. Usually he got home on weekends, but not always. He might be away for a month at a time.

We had parties and house dances where somebody would play the mouth organ or the violin. Square dancing was what we did, not much jitterbugging and all that. We didn't need a lot to entertain us because a lot of our spare time was taken up with chores. Another thing we used to have were box socials, where women would make a lunch and put it in a little box. Whose box it was, wasn't to be advertised, but if you were pretty close to a certain lady you could find out which box was hers. Then the boxes would be bid for, so at lunch time you had the chance to eat lunch with your favourite girl – or somebody else's favourite

Ernie Boudreau as a child

girl if you wanted to bid higher than he did! It all depended on how much money you had. The bids for the boxes got pretty high, some as high as $25! It was a good way to raise money for our church.

Our church was a focal point in the community. The non-catholics and the catholics were close. I can remember the non-catholics coming to church with us and supporting us. The people put on functions like card parties or plays. I don't think we ever had a summer without a big picnic or supper for the church.

Toys weren't easy to come by and you cherished them.

We had three-day functions and the women had to work like hell. I can remember going around to help pick up the food. They kept track of everything, and we couldn't take a thing. The only thing we could eat were the potatoes out of the pot because nobody knew. You couldn't touch a piece of pie or anything!

I'd say the odd guy or girl drank occasionally. Usually we'd keep a case of beer in the ice house. Sometimes this old guy would sell us a bottle of rum or wine and sometimes there was homebrew. I don't think drinking and driving was a big problem because there weren't enough vehicles to have accidents. There were mostly horses, and horses wouldn't run into one another.

The worst job in the world was cutting ice blocks because the saw was heavy and the damn thing would get stuck in the ice. We'd cut them and then pull them out of the water with tongs, put them on the sleighs and draw

them to the ice house for storage. We'd take a load of logs to the Ottawa River and double back with a little load of ice. In the spring of the year all the river guys would drive the logs down to Pembroke. That was a dangerous job; I never did it because I was too young. I don't think we ever went through a year without one or two chaps drowning.

One year, I was in the lumber camp on Bissett Creek Road for a short time, driving horses, skidding logs and drawing them to the River or the railroad sidings. In the bunkhouse, y'have big long bunks in a long building; the bunks were built along the wall, two chaps slept on the bottom and two up above. You didn't have too much – just a straw Palliasse (mattress) and a blanket to sleep on. You were lucky if you didn't get some little crawlies runnin' around because everybody got 'em then! They washed out lice with this heavy soap and kerosene and you would do some combing.

Travel was terrible until they built the old Pembroke and Mattawa highway, and it was just an old winding trail. In the early 1930's, the Government constructed what we call Highway 17. The old highway, which is now flooded, was a God-send in that it created jobs for a lot of people who did not have them in the early 30's during the depression.

I think the depression affected my parents more than me because I was fairly young. A lot of the people in the area were part-time farmers. They had a small bushlot on their farm and they would do what they could with it or they would work in the lumber camps or anywhere that they could find work. I think the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) people were the most fortunate; the wages were very low but they had the better jobs because they were steady. Very few people had a steady job.

...the saw was heavy and the damn thing would get stuck in the ice.

Our mothers made a lot of our clothes. They would take a skirt or dress or an old coat and re-construct it to suit a smaller child or whatever. There were a lot of hand-me-downs. We wore everything. I can remember my dad often wearing mismated boots or rubbers, and he wasn't the only one. If one boot or rubber wore out you could pick up another one some place. As long as it was good and fit you half-decently, you would wear it. You would repair whatever you could, darn your own socks or whatever.

I don't think anybody in our particular area was hungry. Vegetables would be grown in the garden. In the wintertime we would store them as best we could. We had cellars and root houses. A lot of people had their own chickens so they'd have eggs and a cow or two for milk and butter or cream. We had pigs and all sorts of other animals too. There were lots of fish, a few partridge and deer around that we could supplement our diet with. We picked a lot of wild berries; blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, all of them.

I joined the army in January 1943. I went to be a Bren Gunner. I think it was by October '44 when we were stretcher bearers, my chum and I. We were worried and we were scared; if anybody tells you they weren't scared you can tell them they're

Ernie Boudreau at work as a young man

full of...(laughs) whatever! We had some rough times but we had a lot of good times, even when we were overseas and things were pretty rough. There was always a light side to it. If we were stopped for any period of time we would play cards along the road. I made a lot of very solid friendships. You knew what your chum would do for you, and what you would do for your chum.

I was discharged from the army in 1945 but remained in the

You were lucky if you didn't get some little crawlies runnin' around...

hospital because some enemy person didn't like me and shot me. The bullet entered right hip and perforated my tummy. In 1946 I went to the Rideau Military Health Centre for therapy and it was there I met Mary Ellen. I returned home in 1947 and started working for Ontario Hydro on the Des Joachims Generating Station project.

Mary Ellen and I married on August 21, 1948 and lived in a cabin across the road until New Years Day, 1949, when we moved into this house which was still under construction.

When we had trouble with the chap who was building our house, and we didn't have much money, we went to Mr. Forgie, a lawyer and politician. We wondered how we were going to

Ernie Boudreau in the army

resolve the problem. Mr. Forgie said, 'Well, how much money do you owe?', We told him. It wasn't a whole lot, but it was a lot to us! So he dug into his pocket and handed us some cash saying, 'Pay your guy off'. We asked how he wanted the money paid back – did he not want a signature or anything? 'NO!' he said 'When you have it, pay it!' So we went a while later and we payed him his money. I thought that was something!

The politicians used to come around then and we had some wild old political meetings. I can remember them from the time I was little. There were really only two parties then – Conservatives and Liberals; my group was the Liberals. The parties used to go pretty hard against each other around election time. They had some pretty good heavy arguements and insults. I don't think there was fist fighting or anything: I don't think that it got that serious. But after the election, the battling was pretty well over.

The building of the Swisha (Des Joachims) dam was a major change. It was a concern of the older people that were living in the lower level of Mackey and Stonecliffe that their houses would eventually be flooded by the dam. It was traumatic for them to have to move from where they had lived for many years. The buildings were torn down, so some people re-built on higher land; others moved to other areas and bought property or a house. It was pretty upsetting in the long run. I don't believe that the residents got a fair share from Ontario Hydro for the value of their property or for the problems caused by having to move from their old homesteads.

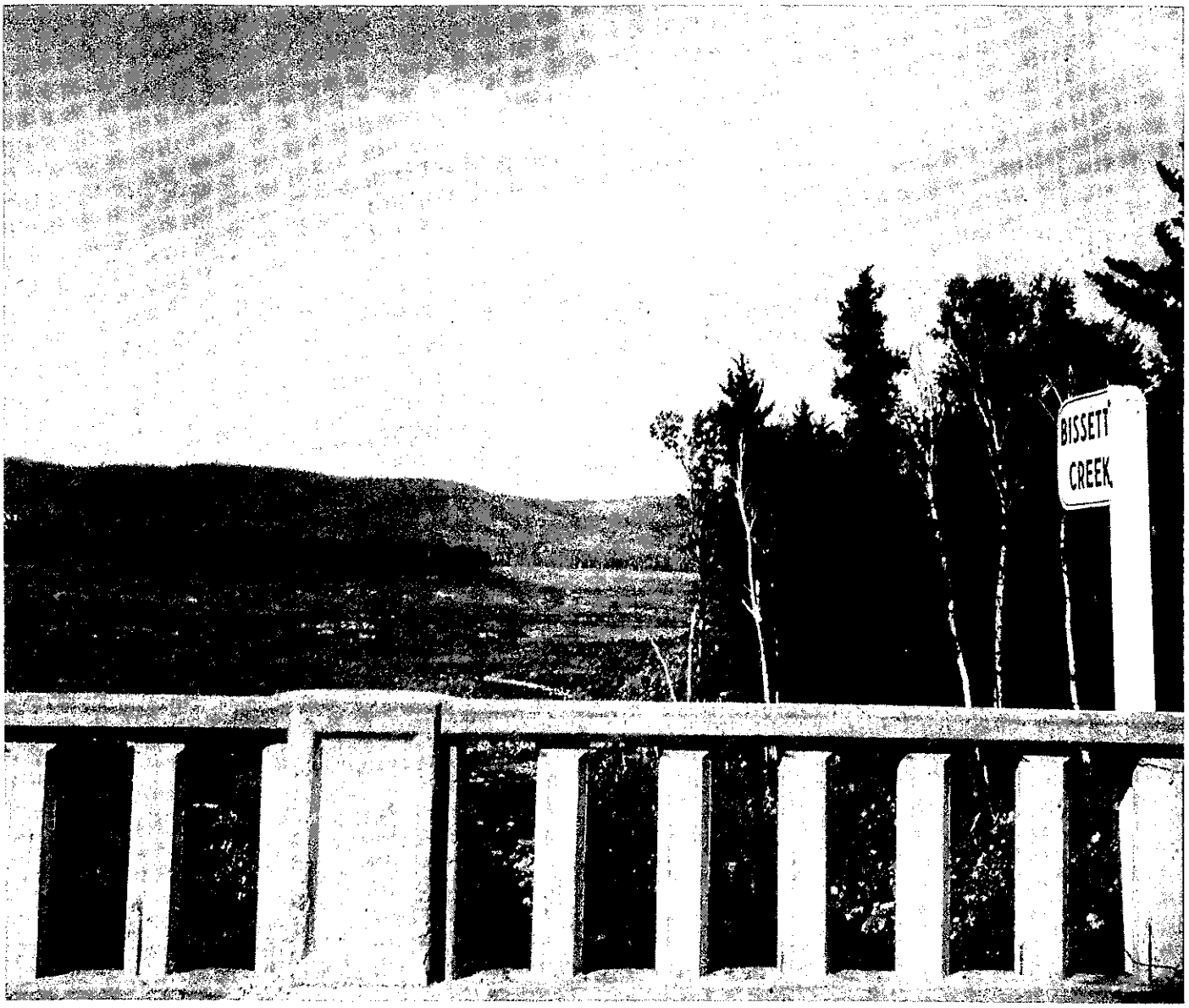
The first generator was put on-line in the early 50's, but this hydro dam had been talked about for years – long before my time. The immediate clearing went on before I came home from the war in 1947. When I did get home, I worked with Ontario Hydro on a survey crew.

I was 13 or 14 when we started on the CPR. Three or four of us young lads from around here would get to do the extra work. We were fortunate that we could get those jobs. I think we made 20 to 25 cents an hour and we were glad to get that. When

they built the old highway 17 in the 30's, I think those guys got a dollar a day. When I came back after the war, I made 65 cents an hour at Ontario Hydro and when I started at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in 1953, I got 90 some-odd cents an hour.

I worked at Atomic Energy for 28 and a half years as a process operator. I did take a couple grade nine and ten high school courses through correspondence, but I don't think the chaps hired on there now as process operator would get on with the qualifications I had. We grew up learning a little bit as we went along."

Mr. Boudreau is the oldest living male born and raised in Mackey. He likes the quietness of the area and loves retirement, in which he is spending his 15th year. He and his wife Mary Ellen have four children. Mr. Boudreau is a man who speaks his mind and who has enjoyed his life. "I'm quite happy to look back at my life, the things that I've been able to do, and be happy with them."



Bissett Creek before the flooding

"The main street at that time was really not a street."

Mr. Maurice Blimkie sat in his favourite chair, a grey (Lazy-boy) recliner. Beside him on the wall, there were a few pictures of his family and war buddies. We sat in a small room facing the highway where he obviously spent much of his time.

With a cheery smile he told us that his memory wasn't very good any more, but we soon found this to be untrue. We introduced ourselves and he started immediately into the history of Chalk River. Throughout our conversation, we needed only nod for him to continue. His love of the area showed through in his words and he took pride in telling us about his home.

Mr. Maurice Blimkie

By Alex Atfield and Nadine Surette

"The village of Chalk River itself started down east of the Forest View Cemetery. The house that's down there now, on the right just below the cemetery, is where William Field's used to be. When the Fields moved from there up to what is now the Village of Chalk River, they brought the name of the river with them. Even before they moved, there was a small settlement in this area. The Village was divided in two by the railway which goes through it.

The south side of the tracks was known as Clarksville. The north side was called Coppsville. The main street at that time was this one right here (points to Highway 17) and it was really not a street. It was a road connecting Pembroke, Petawawa, Chalk River, and the area to the west.

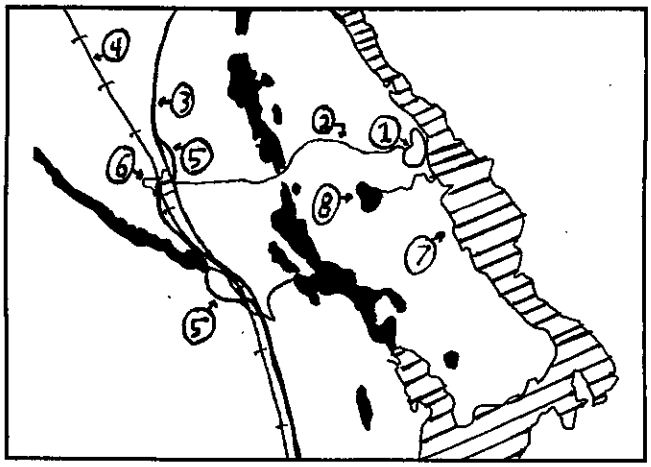
People in this area depended mostly on lumbering for their living. There was also a bit of farming, but as you can see, the farms are not much good around here. The Pearly Lumber Company operated an assembly yard where they made square timbers. In order to get them straight they used a string with chalk on it. They'd put this chalk line down on the timber, snap it, making a line for themselves on the lumber. They'd hew along that line.

The chalk they used wasn't chalk like we use today; they would burn these big alders and apparently it made a good substance like chalk. They named that river the Chalk River on account of using the alders to produce chalk.

The road from Petawawa came in past the internment camp at Landry Crossing, went into the Forestry (Petawawa National Forestry Institute), and crossed over the Chalk River where the bridge on Corry Lake road is now. The road then came up Railway Street, turned onto Main Street, down what is now Highway 17 and proceeded west down Ottawa Street. That was the original road going to Deep River and Mattawa. It was only in 1932 that they built Highway 17 on the north side of the railway tracks down to Petawawa.

We originally came from Pembroke; my father was a filer for the Pembroke Lumber Company. He decided to buy a

Chalk River and Surrounding Area



1. AECL
2. Plant Road
3. Highway 17
4. CPR Tracks
5. Old road to Petawawa
6. Village of Chalk River
7. Ottawa River
8. Perch Lake

farm down here at Perch Lake (now AECL property) in 1917. We moved to Chalk River in 1928. He farmed there until he died in 1931. I was born in 1922 so I was only nine years old when he died. There was nine of us in the family all together.

We were religious enough that we used to travel down from Perch Lake out to the Catholic Church in Chalk River. It was only maybe once a month that they would have a mass there. We used to come out to that mass by horse and buggy, which meant pretty well a whole days journey to go to church and back home again. We weren't religious fanatics or anything like that, but everybody attended their churches.

There was no Catholic school in Chalk River, so I went to the big public school, where the Lion's Club is now. That would be about 1931 I think, when I started. Because my dad had died when I was very young, the only means we had of living was to grow vegetables and kill off beef in the fall. We sold some of it to the local store. My mother got an allowance from the government of twenty-five dollars a month for us four kids at home.

Before school, I used to have to deliver milk in the Village in little honey pails. I'd have a dozen little pails and I'd walk out across the tracks, over to the Wilson Street area and up to the far end of the Townline road. I'd end up at school with about twelve or fifteen empty cans and store them under the stairs at school. Boy, did the kids ever tease me about those!

Allan, my oldest brother, was working for the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) and he used to give me the odd dime. If he gave me a dime then I'd have money to spend, otherwise I'd have no spending money. We didn't have much money. In fact, I remember well walking around in a pair of rubbers, my big toe sticking out. It's funny that I didn't lose that toe to gangrene because I walked around all winter with it sticking out of those rubbers.

In the '30's, there were an awful lot of people walking these roads – out of work. The government decided to take a lot of these fellows in, approximately 500 of them, and put up tents on the other side of the Chalk River, where the Corry Lake beach is now. They gave them five dollars a month, their board and some clothing. That's one of the things that helped the Forestry. These men did research, planted trees,

Before school, I used to have to deliver milk in the village...

cleaned up the forest, and so on.

In this group of people there was one guy who was fairly well educated. This guy was good at music so he called a meeting with some of the local parents and they decided that they would start a boys band. I was a young

lad about fourteen maybe fifteen, and was the bass drummer in that band. We called it the Chalk River CPR Boy's Band. We got a lot of free trips out of the CPR by calling the band that. There was probably about 28 or 30 boys. As the war came on, fellows started joining up. The band got too small, and sort of petered away.

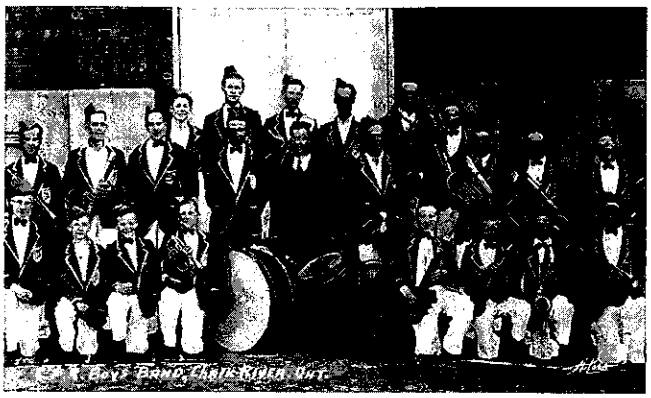
I worked for my brother, a jobber in lumber camps on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. When the war broke out, I did a lot of carpentry work, at camp Petawawa building camps for the soldiers. I worked at the match plant in Pembroke for 32 cents an hour and at the box plant for 26 cents an hour. It took most of the money that I made just to pay my room and board in Pembroke. I then went to the Nobel Perry Sound ammunition factory, making 60 cents an hour. When I left there I joined the Air Force.

People say they joined the army because they were patriotic. That's baloney. I used to hate getting on the trains and seeing all the soldiers, airmen and sailors looking at me thinking 'What the hell are you doing in civilian clothes?' They wouldn't say it, mind you, because it would cause a fight. I got sick and tired of them looking at me and thinking 'Why the hell isn't he...?', so I went ahead and joined up. I was 18 then, not really very old. First I tried the navy, in Toronto, and they said 'Well, we'll take your name. We'll give you a call if there's an opening.' So I waited a couple weeks and said 'The hell with that!'. I went down to Toronto and joined up in the Air Force.

One of our sources of entertainment was... to see fights.

After a few months in the service, stationed in Europe, my squadron was lifted over to a station in England for two weeks. We moved around a lot while in the service, and because of that were given lectures on venereal disease. We were sitting in a lecture room with a medical officer when a young woman knocked on the door and came in. She was a member of the Womens Auxiliary Corps (WAC) and had some information for the officer. Of course we all gandered at her. A couple of days later at a dance, I saw the same WAC and learned that her name was Elsie. Eventually she became my wife.

My squadron was only at the base for two weeks. We were supposed to come back to Canada for 30 days and then go back to Germany for two years of occupation. Something fell through some place, and we did not go back. I met Elsie again and we went together for eight or nine months, then decided, that hell we might as well get married. They gave me my back-leave and nine days after we were married I came back to Canada alone. We really only had nine days together. She didn't come over until August, six months after me.



The Chalk River CPR Boys' Band

World War II affected Chalk River very much. In fact, I drew up a list just a year and a half ago of the people that took part in the war from around this area. I took in the area from Chalk River, to Byways Hotel, west of Deep River. There were well over 115 young men who joined the services from this area. Most were very fortunate, only about five or six didn't come back.

In 1992 Elsie and I went over to Europe for a trip; we made a tour of the whole area that I went through during the war. I found the cemetery where Bernard Owens was buried, I took a picture and brought it back. They have it up in the Chalk River

Legion. Bernard Owens was a Chalk River boy who was killed in the war.

I was overseas at the time Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) came into the area in 1945. When I came back to Chalk River in February of 1946, you couldn't rent an apartment, a house, bedroom or anything. There were many people looking for housing. My mother's house only had three small bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen. A couple by the name of Lord rented one bedroom and the living room from her. This left my mother with only two bedrooms and the kitchen. But it was extra money for her while I was away overseas. She wasn't getting much income, just the money from me being in the service.

I'm still living. I'm 73 and I'm still living!

When I applied for a job at AECL they asked me what I did at the ammunition factory at Nobel before the war. I told them I was an operator in the cordite department, so they gave me an operator's job at AECL. Everyone knew there was some kind of a secret thing that they were working on at AECL, but they couldn't say exactly what. It was only after I was hired on there that I knew what was going on. It's funny how the security was so tight down there when I first went down. Now they're bringing Russians in and showing them everything!

Bruno Pontecorvo was one of our early scientists down at the plant (Chalk River Labs – AECL). I remember him well. I remember him saying one day that if somebody looks at an irradiated reactor rod, it's already too late. They have had enough radiation to kill them. Well I proved him wrong; not that I wanted to. We used to pull the rods out of the reactor (NRX) with a crank, move them over into what we called the storage block and let them down a big well full of water. This well was surrounded with cement 8 or 10 feet thick so the radiation couldn't get out.

One day an operator was letting an irradiated rod down into the well, when it got caught part way down. I went to the well, opened up the door and freed it. But he had left some slack on the cable so it came right down in front of me – woof! Well all the alarms went off all over the whole area. To this day I don't know how much of a shot of radiation I got. It was enough that I was taken out of the active area of the plant for three months; they wouldn't let me go anywhere near it. But it didn't do me any harm, I'm still living. I'm 73 and I'm still living.

As long as I have lived here in Chalk River, the railway station was there. I sort of felt a loss to the village when it was torn down, because it was an old land mark. As a young lad, we used to hang around in that station. That's where we'd go and meet our girlfriends. There was no place else to go. The rink and the station were about the only places we had to socialize.

One of our sources of entertainment was to hang around the Chalk Hotel to see fights. People from the area would go to the hotel, get drinking and an argument over religion or something would cause a fight. There were many, many fights at the hotel. That was one of our things. Who was the hero? I never got into fights. By the time I was old enough to get into the hotel,

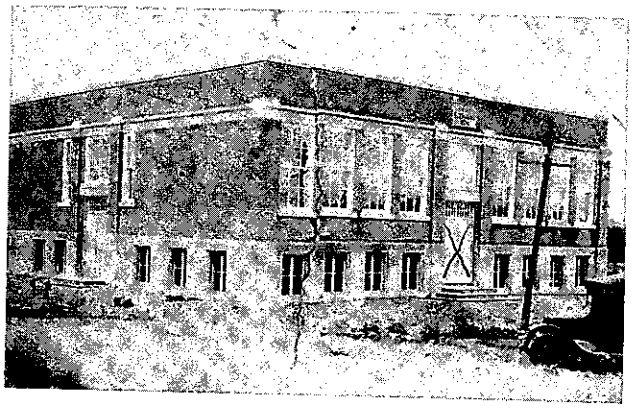
The Copps' Stopping Place

things quieted down.

I think times are better now. People have more money to spend and they haven't got as much to worry about. Life is a lot easier now than what it was when I was younger. But also, all this automation has taken an awful lot of work away from people. Since all that automated equipment came in, there's been unemployment, something wicked. I remember well when bulldozers started to come into use. Nowadays, a bulldozer will cut a hill down in seconds when it used to take a man and a team of horses a week. It's no wonder men had muscles in those days. So really it might be better if we went back to when the men worked hard and there wouldn't be so much unemployment. Mind you the wages were small back in those days.

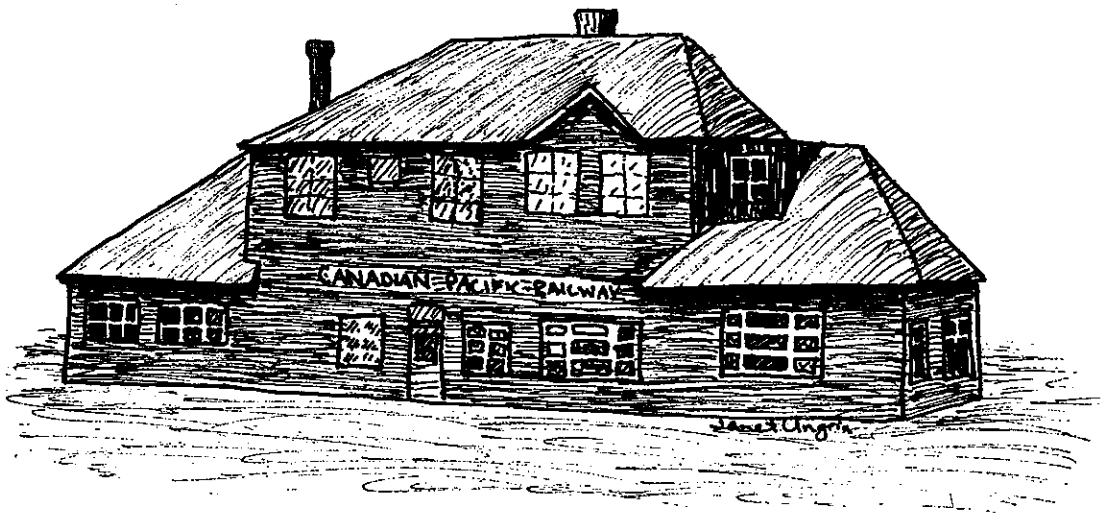
I bought this house in 1989. When I used to walk down to catch the bus to work I'd see Mr. & Mrs. Lunn in this house. I'd see them puttering around in the yard, and think 'Geez, that'd be a great old house to have when I retire'. When it came for sale I sold the other house and moved into this one. This is my castle on the hill.

Mr. Maurice Blimkie has been a great contributor to his community and has lived here all of his life. He has produced a book on the history of the area and has been a member of the Chalk River Council.



In 1984 the old SS #3 school, pictured left, was demolished. The Chalk River & Area Fund Raising Committee bought the Property from Darcy Salmon, and turned it over to the Chalk River and Area Lions Club. The Committee also provided a cash donation in excess of $62,500.

All money for this project was processed through the Chalk River Village Council in order to collect a further Wintario grant of $120,000. The Village Council also donated $30,000, making it possible for the Lions to commence constitution of their building.



"I wanted to try something different, so I did."

The Spokeshave Woodworks sign hanging in the front yard made it easy to find Mr. Dave Fleming's house in Cobden. Nervously, we knocked on the back door. When it opened, there was Mr. Fleming, a gentle looking man, wearing a leather woodworking apron. He invited us in, took our jackets, and offered us some tea. As we were setting up our equipment he enthusiastically started telling us about his woodworking. He showed us some of the chairs that he was building as well as some of the finished ones that filled his house. He was very proud of his work.

Mr. Flemming's workshop was a 10' by 15' room at the back of his house. A woodburning stove, some workbenches and a shaving horse filled most of the floor space. Homemade steam bending equipment, various types of shaving equipment and many other antique tools hung from every available spot on the walls. The blades are the only part of the tools that have changed in a hundred years.

By Mike Munro and Jeff Juby

Mr. Fleming using a spokeshave and shaving horse.

"I still remember when I was six years old, a boy called Floyd Hudgins. He lived down the road. He and I wanted to make bows and arrows but I didn't have a jackknife. My dad heard about this and he bought me my first little knife. So Floyd and I went out in the woods and made bows and arrows. That's how it started; I've been whittling away ever since.

After graduating from university, I got a teaching job at Opeongo High School. At that time there were a number of possibilities available. One was in Mississauga, another was in Burlington down near Hamilton, and the other possibility was up here. This was the most attractive opportunity so I came to the Valley.

In 1980, I was still teaching full-time. My wife and I went to a craft sale down in the Almonte area with a few ash baskets, simple stools and smaller pieces of furniture that we had made. We did quite well. So we thought, hey, there's at least a little bit of holiday money to be made from this. It was also a lot of fun to meet interesting people who got their money's worth from our wares. In succeeding years we produced more material and eventually went to some of the bigger craft shows in the province. We usually sold out at most of the shows we went to. Finally I went to part-time teaching, just one semester a year. I devoted the rest of the year to producing woodwork.

I had been in schools, in one capacity or the another, since I started kindergarten, when I was five. I just felt that by the time I got to 45, I wanted to try some-

thing different, so I did.

In order to learn the trade I visited places in Vermont and New Hampshire to talk to four windsor chairmakers who are rediscovering some of the old ways. There are quite a few good books available too. I've got a mini-library of traditional woodworking books I use for research and such. I write to people in England, Australia, California and all over the world sharing information and tricks on how to do old traditional woodwork. So there's a little bit of networking going on.

I've been published a few times in a journal from England called the Bodger's Gazette. A bodger is another word for a chairmaker who used to live in the woods and treadle out chair parts on his old lathe. Actually, I'm writing an article right now which I'm going to send to a number of woodworking magazines to see if they want to publish it. It concerns an old idea which I've reconstructed; it's the old chairmaker's rounder plane, or sometimes they were called rung engines. Essentially it works like a giant pencil sharpener to form the tenons very quickly and accurately on the ends of chair parts, or to make dowels or wooden plugs.

It works like a giant pencil sharpener.

Partly I'm in business because I can offer customers custom designed furniture. If they want bigger, smaller, different colours, or particular details in the turnings, I can do that for them. If you go into a furniture store, even the very good ones, you see one particular model and that's what you get.

I get a lot of calls from various stores and businesses around the country, wondering if I wholesale stuff, as if I'm producing mass numbers of things with three or four men on a mini assembly line or something. I could go in that direction, but I don't think it would be as satisfying as working with the customers themselves; knowing the houses and homes that the furniture goes into. I could also go the power route and get a lot of the big power machinery that is necessary to produce the bigger numbers. However many of my customers want traditional chairs constructed in the old way, with 18th or 19th century tools and techniques. A lot of my customers know more about antique furniture and 18th century design than I do. With a Windsor chair, the long delicate spindles could not be produced commercially on a large scale because those spindles, have to be made from handsplit straight grain hickory. Almost nothing else will do to get the delicacy and yet the surprising strength that's in the back of that chair. In a commercial production run,

A comb-back armchair made by Mr. Fleming

you'd find the spindles would be much heavier and made out of maple or yellow birch. There would be a fair bit of runout grain in the maple so it would break quite easily if a chair fell over backwards. These hand-shaved hickory spindles are almost like fibreglass; you can bend them right around in a circle before finally they break along the splinters.

Chairs are my bread and butter, although my hobby is making a lot of traditional canoes, snowshoes, sleds and things like that. I enjoy woodworking no matter what I'm doing, but my keenest and most enjoyable project is building bark canoes.

What I'd like to do is to make

a 18' to 20' Ottawa River style Algonquin birch bark canoe. It's got slightly higher ends than a normal canoe and it's big enough to hold four people and all their baggage. I was talking to my son about retracing Anna Jameson's trip of 1837 either next summer or the summer after that, assuming we can find the right material. She had taken a trip around the Great Lakes, including one stretch by birchbark canoe. Mrs. Jameson went from Sault Ste. Marie, an Ojibwa settlement where she met Henry Schoolcraft and some other early writers, around the north shore of Lake Huron, all through the 30,000 Islands, then down to Penatanguishine. If we did this trip we could get some good photographs and some nice sketches that we might be able to sell to the Hudson's Bay Company magazine or Canadian Geographic. So that's my project, to build a big family size Ottawa River style canoe.

I've been asked to build birch bark canoes for other people but I just can't make any promises like that. There's no certainty of finding the birch bark. In the winter I take snowshoe trips in the Quebec hills between the Black River and the Coulonge River. There are big areas of hardwood up in that particular forest. Often along the edge of lakes, creeks and beaver ponds where there is plenty of light and the ground is rich and deep too, you can get very good stands of big birch. Whether I'll find a good enough tree each year is always a guessing game.

My keenest and most enjoyable project is building bark canoes.

I have just kept one canoe, the last one. I gave all the others away to friends. So my brother has a bark canoe and my sister has one. I gave one to Logos Land for their annual Champlain extravaganza – an actor dressed up in 17th century plumes and tassels comes across the water in one of my birch bark canoes.

You can get nice pieces of bark for little birch bark containers and things off dead trees or the trees in the lumber yard. For a canoe though, you need good flexible green bark that comes off an old tree. I go and spot the tree in the winter because you can see through the woods. Then I come back in the hot weather, in late June, and fell the tree. I make sure it falls on a couple of logs set crosswise so that it holds the tree away from the ground. Otherwise I literally have to dig a trench to get the bark off. This is not the most fun when the blackflies are bad. So the big tree comes down and hopefully lands on the logs I set there. Then I take a good stout hunting knife

Mr. Fleming and his son Scott in an Algonquin style birch bark canoe
(Photo by Philip Shakleton)

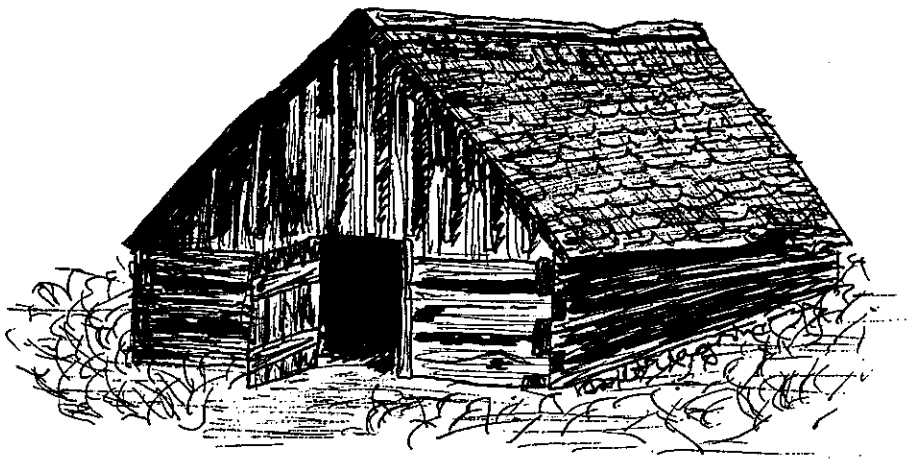
and I cut a slit about eighteen feet long in the big tree. I lift up the edge carefully with the axe. The Indians used a little spud with a curved end made out of moose rib to ease the bark up. Once I get a flap of bark worked up it peels off more readily, because of the hot weather. It doesn't take much work. A friend and I will put a long sapling in between the flap of bark and the exposed trunk and then exerting even pressure along the sapling, peel back the big flap of bark down halfway. We would do the same on the other side. The bark comes off with sort of a ripping sound as it seperates from the cambium. Then you just use your hand to free it very carefully from the base of the log and then pop, it's off. Now I have a huge sheet of bark sometimes six or seven feet wide and eighteen feet long. The whole process in hot weather only takes about 45 minutes from the time I give the tree a little pat to thank it before I cut it down, to the time I'm walking out with my big roll of bark.

In a way bark is like stone-age Kevlar.

A well made bark canoe is about as durable as a cedar and canvas canoe from my experience. I've hit rocks with my bark canoe that would have broken ribs in the cedar and canvas for sure. The cedar ribs and planking aren't nailed and fixed in as they are in cedar strip canoes, so everything's floating and can give a little bit. In a way bark is like stone-age kevlar. That's the beauty of kevlar, it'll give. Birch-bark, in a limited way, does the same thing. That makes it less likely to puncture than most cheap fibreglass canoes.

With hard use, a birch bark canoe will last five years. But if you take good care of it, store it inside and keep the gum from cracking, it could last for 40 or 50 years.

I just do this kind of stuff for fun. It's great going into the woods with an axe and a knife and seeing what you can do. It beats marking a big stack of English essays anyhow."



Acknowledgments

The TAMARACK program's success has been directly related to the enthusiastic assistance and participation of many people. Special thanks to:

Carl Hoelke, who generously took the time to accompany us on all of our outings.

Charlotte and Ivan McWilliam, who have accompanied us on several outings. A special thanks to Charlotte who helped us express our TAMARACK experiences through writing.

Gordon Ramsey of the Petawawa Nationl Forestry Institute, who made the arrangements for our winter outing.

School House Museum, and Floyd and Ellen McQuestion, whose endless knowledge of Valley history and old photos helped us clarify our articles.

Laurie Moeck, who shared her talent of sketching with us and also accompained us on a couple of outings.

Donna Corning, Ivan Saari, Tim Schutt, and Don Stewart, who gave us access to the computers whenever possible and who were always very helpful when we had problems.

Staff of the Petawawa National Forestry Institute, who invited us into their labs and gave us an oppurtunity to work with them on their research projects. Future TAMARACK classes will be sorry to miss this experience.

Paul Joynes, our co-op student who has enthusiastically helped with all aspects of our program.

Mary Fehrenbach, who supported our program throughout the year.

Darlene Patterson, whose company we enjoyed on our winter outing and who was always willing to help out in any way she could.

Jill Mark, who took the time to teach us about food drying.

Ms. Randy Windsor and Mr. Howard Saari, who trusted us to give workshops to some of their students on Earth Day, and to Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Meteer and Mrs. Steels whose classes we worked with.

Snider's Pharmacy, Vic and Ina Thompson, Fraser's Men's Wear in Renfrew and Godfathers who help by selling copies of our magazine.

Parents of TAMARACK students, without whom the program wouldn't be possible. They supported and helped us in every imaginable way.

Marg Killey and the Deep River Horticultural Society for helping us to keep the Mackenzie High School quadrangle beautiful.

Canadian Forces Base Petawawa for allowing us to use Fort Pine.

Heritage Renfrew for allowing us to use photographs for the Agnes Lockwood article and to B.G. Watt's family for allowing us to use a photograph of Vern Cournoyer.

Thank You

TAMARACK would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their financial support of our program

Knights Of Columbus, Deep River
Petawawa Rotary Club
First Deep River Boy Scouts
Deep River Legion
Shirley French
Esilman Auto
Darlene Patterson
Dr. Terry McVey
Dr. Nihad Fahmi
Neta de Vette
Valu-Mart
Snider's Pharmacy
Valley Savings
John Lepage Service Centre
George W. Leconte
Chalk River Shell
Pure and Simple Edibles
Ray's Meat and Variety
Bank of Nova Scotia
Mr. Gas
Joyce Lemke
Colleen Payer
Dr. Mike Van Tomme

ISBN # 1183-7950