

Community Memory Vault: Nature & Outdoors

Local histories collected by the Deep River Public Library

Foreword

This book is part of a larger, ongoing project orchestrated by the Deep River Public Library to gather community history in informal written accounts. To this date, the Library has received over four hundred submissions to the Community Memory Vault and arranged them under four broad and often-overlapping categories: Nature & Outdoors, Community Life, Town Development, and AECL. These topics are pillars of the town's formation and naturally very entrenched with one another, making them impossible to separate cleanly. Read all four volumes to get the fullest picture of our extensive records!

While one goal of this project is to publish physical volumes for public access, these publications are not a “finish line” for our Community Memory Vault project. Rather, it is a monument to what has been collected thus far, with full intentions to continue this collection as a living document that naturally will grow and change over time. If you find yourself recalling your own stories while reading through this book, we eagerly encourage you to subscribe to the Library's Memory Vault e-mailing list, which will ask weekly for stories regarding different local history topics. You can also email the Library directly with a story by sending a message to info@deepriverlibrary.ca.

Most official record-keeping done for “Deep River” (est. 1944) often emphasizes AECL's research and the achievements of its esteemed scientific residents, with gaps existing regarding many other aspects of community life. Official records may cover our national advancements in nuclear technology, but they often omit details of town life that are less polished, and in the same way, more human. With this collection, we aim to highlight the messy, the sentimental, the nuanced, the ridiculous, and the loving—all the details that make Deep River, in the words of Peter C. Newman, *almost* the perfect place to live.

It's worth noting that the history of this land now known as Deep River reaches back much farther than the origins of the atomic energy project in 1944. Before this town became “Deep River” in 1944, it was a village called “Wylie Hamlet” (sometimes referred to by the unfortunate name “Indian Village”). One of its founding families was Jean Baptiste Lamure and his wife Marie Pilon (married 1871), both of Algonquin and French Canadian descent. Wylie Hamlet consisted of nine log cabins along the river, stretching from the present-day Keys Conference Centre to present-day Centennial Rock. In 1944,

His Majesty the King expropriated the land this village stood on, for “war purposes”. The land became the planned community of “Deep River” for the purpose of habitation by select Allied scientists working on a top-secret wartime nuclear project. Along with a few nearby settler landowners whose lands were also expropriated, the Indigenous families in Wylie Hamlet were forced to leave their homes and move away from the river that was central to their economic and family lives. All but one of the cabins were bulldozed, and each family received compensation—some as little as \$75.

In the centuries before it was named “Deep River”, this land was stewarded by the Algonquin Anishnaabe Nation and was a vital corridor for trade between Indigenous populations and immigrant fur traders. Virginia Adams Hunt was a child when the government relocated her family to the current-day Wylie Road. She wrote her childhood stories in the *North Renfrew Times* in 2006, reminiscing, “I carried a lot of resentment for the people of Deep River, but I realize now that most of them came from war-torn Europe, and they found a piece of Heaven in Deep River ... but I wish they wouldn’t have taken my share, too.”

Each story recorded here, like any other, provides just one of the infinite perspectives our community hold. As you read through these accounts, we encourage you to wonder about the stories that may still be missing, unspoken, or forgotten—and to consider why they are that way.

Deep River Public Library, August 2026

Area Origins

“Affection for Canada”:

The title says, “affection for Canada”. True, of course, but such a lot of feelings since Anne and I came to Canada over sixty years ago from Northern Ireland. So many changes, both real and perceived, when looked at with changing eyes. In those early days, the method of travel across the Atlantic was by boat. The time taken was about one week. Anne, and I left Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1958, and crossed the Atlantic by a Cunard Line boat called the *Sylvania*. By today’s standards of holiday cruising boats, with multiple cabins, swimming pools, deck games, and many lounge chairs, not to mention large stabilizers, the *Sylvania* was a *small* boat. Although it was a smooth crossing by Atlantic Ocean standards, many passengers were seasick, including Anne. The crossing is something she wants to forget. Also, she did not want to be reminded that I was an engineer who had worked for Harland and Wolfe...the same company that had built the *Titanic*. We did not have a job to go to, but why would we let a little thing like that stop us? Oh, the flawed wisdom of youth. Anne was twenty-one years old, and I was twenty-three. We had been married one year. We left tearful parents, but we wanted the adventure. That is what it was, an adventure. We were not trying to settle in a new land and make our fortune. We had no overwhelming reason to leave Ireland; just itchy feet and the youthful energy to explore. Canada simply appealed, and the literature from Canada House, located in downtown Belfast, looked glorious: pristine lakes and rivers, land covered in trees, vast landscapes, snow totally beyond our experience. There was no mention of blackflies or mosquitos in the literature. And, there appeared to be work for me as an engineer. For example, companies engaged with the Avro Arrow were advertising for help. Being young and naïve, problems with the Avro Arrow never occurred to me. But I am getting a little ahead of myself. As our boat came slowly up the St. Lawrence River toward Montreal, we eagerly watched the shoreline as it became closer on each side. It was early spring, and the land was emerging from a Canadian winter. The land looked bleak. This part of Canada was seen at its worst: all brown and spotty with leafless bush. In contrast, the Ireland we had left was green and lush with growth. Anne has laughingly reminded me a few times the words that went through her mind: “In the name of God, David. Where is this place you have brought me?” We first settled in Toronto, where our friends lived. Despite all the literature from Canada House, in our mind Toronto was the place to be. As it turned out, I could not find work...lots of interviews,

including one from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL). But no offers came. Anne got work with Bell. A decent job, but the other workers were hostile, and would not sit with her in the cafeteria. She was deemed to be a DP, a Displaced Person who came to Canada to take away their jobs. Still, it paid the rent, so she stayed on, and I continued looking for work. A few months later, I realized that the problem with my getting a job was the security clearance for the work I had applied for. We had arrived in Canada in May 1958, and, finally, in October an offer came from RCA in Montreal, working on the Avro Arrow. However, I would have to spend time in a “holding” office pending the security clearance. We moved to Montreal, and after two weeks an offer came from AECL. I politely turned down the offer, saying that it would be disloyal of me to quit RCA so soon. The next week a rumour began to circulate that work was going to cease on the Arrow. The president of RCA held a big meeting to assure us all that the newspaper reports were false. Alternative facts even then! Three weeks later the Avro Arrow was cancelled by the Diefenbaker government, and I lost my job. I asked AECL to renew their offer and they did. So, we boarded the train for Deep River, and our lives changed forever, beginning with the simple act of being invited by a neighbour to come over for coffee. Friendly people were a great asset; but also, we were now surrounded by trees and had easy access to rivers and lakes. It was fall, and the colours were astonishing. There were no bugs. Canada House in Belfast had not lied. Little did I know what next summer would bring. Then our first winter came, and we were astonished at the depth of snow as the winter progressed. We watched people ski down hills and back up again using a tee-bar rope system. We watched people ice skate on open-air neighbourhood ice rinks. We marvelled at the speed of hockey players, and I could not imagine trying to skate with some well-padded guy leaning into me. This action seemed to be very common, especially in the professional game on the TV. In those early days, TV was “black and white” with a poor screen which prevented you from seeing “the game” clearly. In summer, we toured through Algonquin Park and, at that time, 1959, deer were plentiful and came out of the bush. We were allowed, encouraged even, to hand-feed them. This practice is taboo now. We stayed for three years and then, as planned, the adventure ended, and we went back to Ireland. We went back by boat, but this time it was one of the largest liners of the day—the Queen Mary. We settled down in Ireland to raise a family. My job was secure, lecturing in a technical college; Anne stayed home to take care of the home and two young children; we had supportive parents. But Canada beckoned and we began investigating a return to Canada. After five years, we returned, this time by plane to Ottawa, and then directly to Deep River with a job to go to and the rest, as they say, is history. With a two-year

old daughter and a four-year old son, this time the plan was different. Canada was to be our home. We embraced the lifestyle opportunities afforded by numerous waterways, provincial and federal parks, sand beaches, wild animals, and lots of snow...oh, and real maple syrup. As we explored, we realized that Canadians up and down the Ottawa Valley were friendly. Then, as we went farther afield, we found that all Canadians were friendly. The early Toronto experience was not in any way typical. Our children grew up in Deep River. As has been said many times, Deep River is a wonderful place to bring up children. But then they get bigger and must leave if they want more education or work. We joke that they leave as 'teenagers' and come back as 'people'. That is not to say that teenagers are not people (some may argue this point) but they come back mature. Sometimes they come back with partners. And, in our case, a total of six grandchildren...six more Canadians. It was hectic when our children, their partners, and grandchildren all came at once. We had a bungalow and we solved the accommodation problem by giving the ground floor to one family and the finished basement to the other family. And we moved to the house trailer on the driveway where we had a good night's sleep before going into the house to deal with noisy families. All six grandchildren have mostly completed their education in various universities. I say mostly because two of them are pursuing advanced degrees. One has finished medical school but is pursuing a medical career in emergency medicine. They no longer visit all together. We meet up with them, but in smaller groups. Summer jobs and romantic liaisons interfere with visiting Grannie. Go figure. We were never like that... were we? I think I became a real Canadian when I watched a mosquito land on my bare arm, take its fill of my blood, and fly away. It was an experiment that failed. I thought there would be no itch if I did not interfere with the mosquito's meal. We've been to most provinces from east to west, enjoying and marvelling at the vastness of the country. We finally visited Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017 for our sixtieth wedding anniversary. It was a two-week tour that we would gladly repeat, as we would for most places in Canada we have visited over the years. It is with great affection for Canada that we hope to live here in Deep River for many more years.

– David Thompson, on area origins • 60+ years in the area

I came here in 1961 with my then husband. It was his first full-time job after graduation. In those days jobs were plentiful and even though he had other

offers, he chose the job at Chalk River. It was so beautiful here with the huge river and the surrounding forests. We thought we would stay for a few years so he could get some job experience and perhaps move on, but we fell in love with the place and stayed. It was a wonderful place to raise a family and we have not regretted our decision to stay. He has now passed on but I am still here after 62 years.

– Marilyn Charbonneau, on area origins • 60+ years in the area

Some background. My husband, Russell Bonora, and I moved from Sudbury 40 years ago when he retired from CP Rail. I also worked at CP Rail, which was how we met. We would often visit his brother, sister and other relatives who lived in the area, mostly in Chalk River. On one of these visits, I told Russell I had fallen in love with the 'Valley' and wanted to move there when he retired. We found riverfront property in Point Alexander and began renovating a cottage into a house. From spring to fall, we would watch a tugboat towing log booms on our mighty Ottawa River. Life seemed simpler and gentler then; it was a bittersweet time and the end of an era when the logs began being trucked. According to Arnprior & McNab Braeside Archives, the last log boom on Ottawa River took place in 1991, a huge piece of our local history.

– Nora Waddell, on change • 40+ years in the area

Waterfront Activities

My former husband was involved with some clubs during the 1960s and 70s that seem to no longer exist, e.g the Chess Club that was very active at that time. Also the Camera Club that had some excellent photographers. They often had competitions for best photos in different categories with prizes. The Motorboat Club was another popular club with BBQs at Pres'qu Isle that went on all night with loud partying. There were boat races on the river right out in front of the present river walk. These often included water ski displays by daring guys and there was even a water-ski jump. Lots of fun in those days.

– Marilyn Charbonneau • 62 years in the area

The Deep River Library is the heart of the community! The arts programmes are particularly excellent. Put a large striking sign on hwy.#17 at Deep river Road showing that the river ,beaches ,parks and Library are fantastic. Currently most people who drive by Deep River see only what is on the highway and never come into the town nor do they see the River. Everyone who lives here does so because of the magnificent river! BB.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

Brian Burke - The main attraction for my family was the Ottawa River. All summer we played by and in the river. The other high light for me was going to the Strand Theatre Saturdays and taking in a double feature. The River is the reason I moved back to the area. BB.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

There was a distinct windsurfing phase that didnt last too long. We all tried it, i remember a rack of a whole bunch of them at the yacht club when i was a late teen. I was able to sail down the river but couldnt tack back so had to come to shore and walk back. the phase did not last too long as i remember and now you rarely see one on the river.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area



Photos: Diana McElroy

The bottom two photos are not Y-flyers, but a motorboat under construction. The material was also plywood. My family had a similar boat, bought some time in the 50's from someone who moved away. Prior to that, we had a boat that was a small version of a pointer. My Dad attached a bracket that held a 5-HP motor, and we used to cross the river for picnics on the other side (it took a long time with that boat and motor). The old motor was able to propel the larger boat, but even more slowly, so we acquired a larger motor. Many enjoyable trips across and up and down the river over the years, many picnics, swimming, etc. People used to launch boats down a steep track from what is now Brockhouse Way, across from Cockroft School. A remnant of that track is still visible, though somewhat overgrown. I also recall seeing some boats launched at the Pumphouse - basically manhandled into the water, as there was no ramp. I believe the old carpentry shop was just across the road from Cockroft. I remember watching it being moved to the Yacht and Tennis Club location. As a young child, I hadn't known that a building could be moved like that, so found the process quite exotic.

– Diana McElroy • in the area since 1949

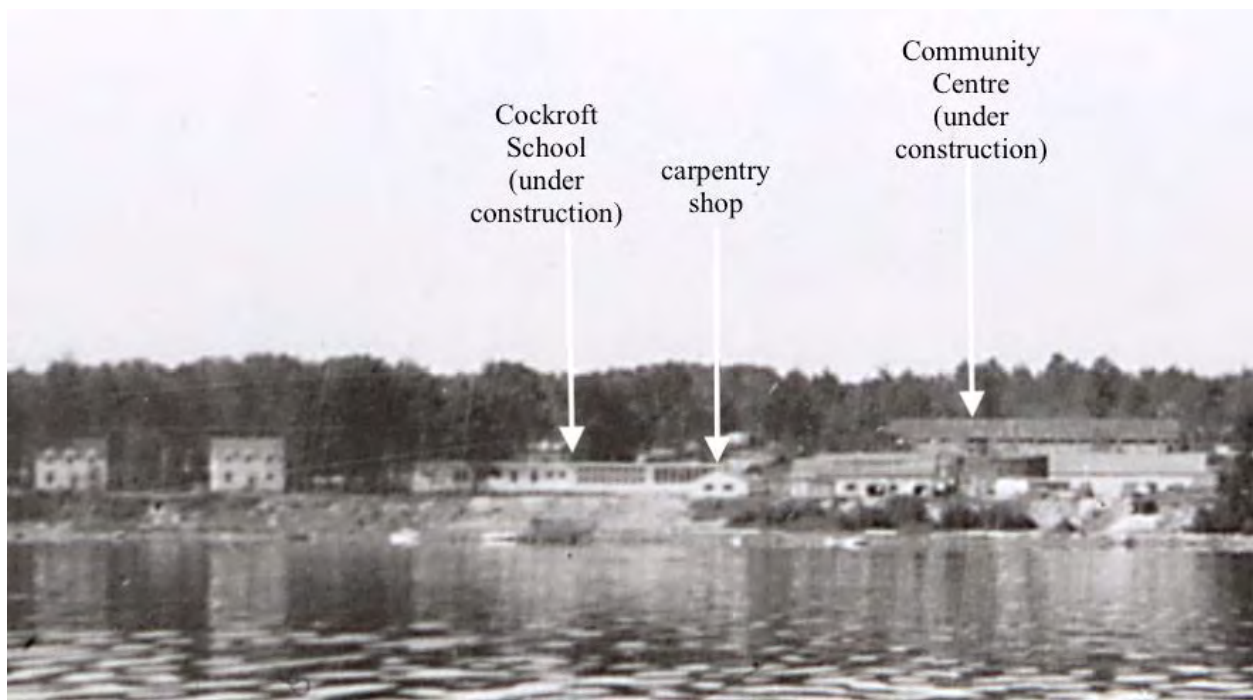


Photo: Diana McElroy, April 1946

We had a sailboat and before the marina was built, in order to get to where it was moored in the bay in front of the town, we had to pile into a little wooden dinghy and row out to it. It was much more convenient when the marina was built and we could just load our stuff from our dock. The available berths were soon filled and a waiting list created for later applicants.

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

In the mid 60's I built an 8' sea flea in our garage in Ottawa which I then brought to use at the cottage in Deep. The plan came from a 1940's book of boat plans that my dad used to build a combination motor boat / sailboat (although we never used it to sail). We had an old Sea King 5 horse motor that would not get my sea flea up on a plane. About a week after plowing around in our bay, my parents told me to fetch something from the back of our '66 Chevelle wagon. There was a brand spanking new Evinrude 5 horse outboard motor from Dick Plummer. Well the entire summer I was gone on the water, at least as long as my allowance lasted for gas and oil.

– Neil Freeborn • 10+ years in the area plus many summers

Shel Gibson was the kingpin for getting a marina! Boat launching must be free! Tax dollars have already paid for the marina! Where do the fees to launch go?????

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area



July 25, 1979. *North Renfrew Times*. "Kamikaze Bicyclist: Kids have discovered another exciting way to enjoy the water. Fortunately for his parental relations, this young cyclist's face is covered as he tears down the pier."

Photo: *North Renfrew Times*, 1979.

We had a sailboat and before the marina was built, in order to get to where it was moored in the bay in front of the town, we had to pile into a little wooden dinghy and row out to it. It was much more convenient when the marina was built and we could just load our stuff from our dock. The available berths were soon filled and a waiting list created for later applicants. Ann Serdula

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

I got one of the windsurfers designed by John Hilborn and used it for a season or two. It was fun if there was a suitable wind, but I found that if there was too little wind, it was very boring to stand out there and try to make your way back to shore, and if there was too much wind, I couldn't handle it. From my house I couldn't tell what the wind conditions were like on the river, so I would waste time going down to the river to assess the conditions. I found this so frustrating, I gave up windsurfing and took up kayaking instead where you didn't have to worry too much about wind conditions. However, I never had to be rescued and always made it back myself on the windsurfer.

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

There were a fair number of years when the river froze solid and without snow. Those times we watched the next level of windsurfing on skates. I remember once a strong wind sent several of us all the way to the beach from the pier (no sail) and the skate back to base was tough! Cheers, Leslie Moore

– Leslie Moore • 70+ years in the area

I am thoroughly enjoying your Weekly History Question emails, and responding when I think I have something to contribute. A few days ago someone sent me a clipping from the NRT, sadly not dated but I believe it is from around 1973 or '74, showing two long-time residents, my dad Jim denHartog and his colleague, Pat Bindner, taking part in the annual Deep River to Fort William race, in which (foolhardy and partly crazy?) men competed to see who could get onto the Ottawa River and make it to Fort William earliest in the spring. A few years ago and just before he died, my sisters and I first learned about our dad's participation, and he recounted how he and Pat dragged their motorboat over ice sheets in between stretches of frigid open water in a rabid attempt to be first that year. Pat fell in several times, and I personally count both of them lucky to have survived the adventure at all. The race, I think, is a testament both to the lengths those early Deep Riverites would go in the spirit of competitiveness, and perhaps also to how everyone was just a little bit mad. I've attached the clipping below.

– Tracy Kasaboski, on the Deep River to Fort William Race • 60+ years in the area



Photo: Tracy Kasaboski, page of *North Renfrew Times* circa. 1973

Reading the NRT ('old school' - hardcopy) from afar - Oshawa, Ont., - and came across mention of the 'Community Memory Vault: The Cross-River Swim'. Heeding your call for "memories, stories and local knowledge...when you hear the words 'Cross-River Swim", attached are some fond memories from 55 years ago - 1970.

I swam the river that year at age 13, finishing 5th overall and taking home the silver medal to the surprise of many...and somewhat myself included! Ironically, only a week or two before, I failed my Red Cross Senior swim test (300m swim) as a result of ingesting too much water (choppy conditions made it challenging). As a result, many including some of the beach staff (Lifeguards / Instructors) predicted I wouldn't be able to complete the river swim, failing to recognize my failure to pass the Senior test for simply what it was - nausea induced from ingesting untreated river water...nothing more. I not only completed the crossing as indicated above, but beat one of two swimming instructors (Beatrice Mawson) in the process and finishing only 2:20mins behind the other instructor (Ian Ross) who came in 3rd! Sweet justice...without

ill will. As an aside: I not only completed the Cross-River Swim, but over the many years continued my competitive ways in various athletic endeavours including Triathlon and Duathlon where I competed for 12 years (1993-2004) and raced as a top amateur in my age group (M40-44) at two World Duathlon Championships in Germany ('98) and the U.S. ('99). I continued racing Tri's / Du's, Road Races, Cross Country, Mud & Obstacle, OCR's, etc. up until 2022 (age 65). My last official race before hanging up the running shoes was the 'North of 7 OCR', a qualifier for the World OCR Championships in the U.S.. You had to finish top 3 overall to qualify. I finished 10th (at 65yrs!). I owe all of my athletic (and academic) success from the few years our family lived in Deep River (1967-1971) and the many opportunities that were afforded me. I'll always be thankful. The town holds a special place in my heart. Respectfully, Winston

– Winston Stairs • in the area from September 1967 to July 1971



Photo: Winston Stairs

Hi, the cross river swim was a Deep River tradition that was not always done during the actual "cross river swim". It was usually done from Indian Point back to the soccer field. Geoff Cox and I did it on our day off from lifeguarding at the beach. But we went from the side of the beach across to Indian Point, which should've been faster because it was with the current. It took us an hour. A couple of years later in the actual "cross river swim", a woman native'

and well known to Deep River folks completed the swim in 27 minutes - incredible swim! I don't know if that's ever been matched and I can't remember the young lady's name who made that swim. What does the current record stand at? Thanks for the great work you. Thanks for including me in your work.

– Sanford Atkins • in the area from 1946-1967

The “good old days” would definitely include the Deep River Motorboat Club’s annual regattas held on the Deep River waterfront and at Fort William. Boat races featuring Len Sharp , Al Smith, Bob Lafontaine from Pembroke were always exciting. The Bachelder family performing waterski jumps and one year Whitney Cook “jumping” from a plane thrilled local crowds. Ken

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

This brought back memories of the 6x1 relay in which I participated from 1996 to 2012. In 1998 six older people formed a group which we named Team Methusela. I have photos from 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007 to 2012 but for the last three years I served only as timekeeper as my running days were over. Attached is a photo of the first Methusela team.

– Ann Serdula, on the 6x1 relay & cross-River swim • 60+ years in the area



6x1 Relay, Team Methusela: Al Rose, Ann Serdula, Alison Goodale, John Spiers, Eric Butterworth, Vern McCall July 22, 1998

Photo: Ann Serdula

One of the earliest Summerfests I can remember was staged on the grassy area in front of the bowling alley facing towards the town hall. Not a very big space. There was a tent set up on the lawn, and it was standing room only underneath it when the skies opened that night and it teemed rain. Of course a bit of bad weather didn't stop anyone from continuing to party under the tent, even if we were more than a little damp and pressed in like sardines and had to make mad dashes through the downpour to get to the port-a-potties. Fun times.

– Tracy Kasaboski, on the 6x1 relay & cross-River swim • in the area since 1949

Wildlife

My wildlife memory is actually related to events that happened to my mother who told me of 2 incidents between herself and 'wildlife'. I am not sure which happened first however here is what happened...in my mother's words. the early 1950s my parents lived in Mackey, however, did not yet have electricity in the house, so therefore did not have a refrigerator. We did however have an icehouse (solid log construction) which was a short distance away from the house up on a small hill. Mum used to do the dishes after a meal in a dish pan and then take the dirty water and throw it out in the yard afterwards. On this occasion she decided to throw the dirty water out on the other side of the icehouse, however when she went around the corner who did she meet but a black bear who was coming around the other way...the outcome was that she screamed and ran back to the house and the bear ran back in the direction it had come from, and not sure what happened to the dirty dish water. The second event also happened in the same time frame of the early 1950s. My mum came from a dairy farm outside of Navan Ontario and was particularly fond of banty roosters, especially if the color of their feathers was a color scheme that she liked. At that time my parents kept a few chickens (which were loose in the yard most times) and my mum also had a beautifully colored banty rooster who was king of the flock and would of course strut around and just generally show off. One day the rooster was in the back yard standing up on a big stump still showing off by crowing and dancing around a little. My mum happened to notice that all this showmanship had caught the attention of a big hawk who was slowly but surely descending on the unsuspecting banty rooster. My mum ran into the house and got the 22-caliber rifle and headed back out to the yard where the rooster was still doing his thing on top of the stump. She loaded the gun and waited for her opportunity to try and shoot the hawk before it took her rooster. She waited and when the hawk was really low down and just about to grab the banty rooster she fired the gun, however her aim was a little off with the unexpected result that she actually shot the rooster and the hawk was able to make off with a (soon to be) dead bird instead of a live one. At least she still had the courage to tell the story and laugh a little about it all!

– Dave Balla-Boudreau • most of his life in the area

When we heard the DDT spray truck coming along the street, the mothers would all rush to close the windows and doors to keep the awful smell out. But many kids chased along behind the truck. Whether the spraying did any good is debatable because those black flies would still take chunks out of us anyway.

– *Marilyn Charbonneau, on spraying for mosquitoes • 60+ years in the area*

When we were young we often slept out in the back yard with only a tarp under the sleeping bag for humidity from the grass and a sticks and cheese cloth rig at our pillow to fight off mosquitoes. Sometimes we did run out to watch the fog truck. I had my window open on a very still to night and woke up about 3 a.m. to a room full of that fog. I often wonder about our health as we grow older. Cheers, Leslie Moore

– *Leslie Moore, on spraying for mosquitoes • 70+ years in the area*

Yes! The public used to swim and dive from the rocks below the control dam at Des Joachims. Now it is off limits because automated control of Ontario dams is somewhere like in Barrie. Two people were drowned when the automated program flooded Barret Chute near Calabogie without any warning to all the people swimming below that dam site. Once again Conservative government working for the voters of Ontario. Also there is no more cycling after the Deep River works fogging truck to kill black flies, particularly with DDT. No more good, bad and ugly. Cheers, The good old days.

– *Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area*

After the fire that burned Frasers and the old A&P section I picked the crab apple trees covered in smoke from behind the Giant Tiger and made Jelly. Cheers, Leslie Moore

– *Leslie Moore, on a surprise • 70+ years in the area*

My mother spent her early married life in Trail, B.C. on the banks of the Columbia River with the Rockies rising on the opposite shore. She observed Deep River has a similar setting. Also Trail is a one-industry town. The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company (later Teck-Comico) produced the heavy water coolant for the Chalk River Labs in the early days.

– *Charlotte McWilliam • 50+ years in the area*

“It was in March, and there was lots of snow. I remember we had an appointment to have the owners show us around [the house we would buy]. We were looking out the picture window and all I could see was snow, but he was explaining what was under the snow---the little shrubbery, he could call them all by name.”

– *Geraldine Miller (transcribed from interview) • 60+ years in the area*

Summertime Activities

The cricket club! In the 50s and 60s into the 70s there were enough men from England living in the town that a cricket club was started. Money was spent on basic equipment including a tightly woven carpet which could be laid to make a stable pitch for the game on lawn. Games were played on the campus or in Cedar Park (as Bill Rounding Park was called then). In the 70s the numbers increased when Pakistanis came to AECL for nuclear reactor training for several months. Games were played against clubs in Ottawa and Montreal, both here and there. Once the Pakistanis left and players were getting older, the club slowly faded away.

– Mim Barry, on sports & clubs • 60+ years in the area

In the summer of 1967 I was working at the plant and doing odd jobs for \$2 an hour. Dr. Beaupres hired me to do odd jobs for him. One of those jobs was at a garden plot just outside of town, towards Chalk River. I went out there on a hot, early June evening to turn over his garden. It took me 2 hours working at a frantic pace, because the mosquitoes were eating me alive. It was the hardest \$4 I ever made! Sanford Atkins

– Sanford Atkins, on building a garden • in the area from 1946-1967

THE most important bird expert in the Deep River area was and will always be W.H.(Bill) Walker. He recorded his sightings for many years and wrote a bird column in the NRT from 1969 to 1992. See “Birds about town” in library catalogue

– Jim Ungrin • 50+ years in the area

My husband Ken Serdula grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan so he was very interested in gardening. He passed this on to our children by getting a plot in the community gardens which in 1977 were beside Canadian Tire on the Highway in Deep River. These photos show them at the plot. Ann Serdula.

– Ann Serdula, on building a garden • 60+ years in the area



Highway garden plot, May 1977



Highway garden plot, May 1977

Photo: Ann Serdula

One common theme which must remain part of the Deep River landscape is the waterfront “campus”. The downtown open field was the scene of many high school football games, rugby and soccer games, and celebratory firework displays. It is a natural gathering place for the local people and must be preserved forever.

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

Wintertime Activities

One club I remember from my first years in Deep River was the Algonquin Car Club. They held car rallies where we were given a set of instructions to follow which led us all over roads in the area and we had to complete the course in a limited time. These I did with the man whom I eventually married. I tended to get car sick if the road was uneven and I was trying to read. One time I ordered him to "Stop the Car", I got out, threw up, then jumped back in and we continued the rally, only losing a few seconds. Back then we didn't seem to worry about the price of gas. I'm not sure if this was part of the Algonquin Car Club but there was something called "Dice on Ice" where you could drive your vehicle around a plowed circuit on the ice on the river. I wanted to try this and the same boyfriend wanted to be a passenger but I said he could come with me only if he promised not to utter a word and not even make an audible gasp. This was great practice for learning how to control a car on icy roads in a safe environment. The river in those days would freeze very hard and it was quite safe to do this.

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

Growing up in Deep River in the 1970's and 80's, my prominent memory is a lot of snow, towering snowbanks and snow forts in the back yard. Sliding off your bungalow roof was not uncommon. Children would be outside most of the time playing and building in the snow. School was not cancelled as most children walked to school. Tobogganing at Hill Park, skiing at Double Dip (going up with the rope tow) and x-country at the DRXC trails and "the forestry" was popular, with many people at each of these areas. Skating at the many rinks around town was also popular. I remember people being outside, enjoying winter.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

My sisters and I used to build snow forts in the snowbanks, which I remember as being HUGE. Likely they *were* higher than now (especially this winter!) - but I suspect the memory is also somewhat skewed by the kaleidoscope of age. Still, we created hard-packed walls to denote various rooms, and built shelves and carved out sitting areas and brought out our toy cups and saucers and had "tea." We also ventured with our toboggans to Hill Park along with the rest of the town. It was a busy place. You slid on wooden toboggans (and later, on

metal ones that were dangerous because they often got bent and the metal then had jagged edges), pieces of cardboard, or just on your behind if the hill was icy. People skied there too, although it was rudimentary, and without any sort of tow rope to get you back to the top of the hill you had to unbuckle the skis and walk up just like the tobogganers. My dad once took my London, Ontario cousins there to try skiing - or maybe it was just tobogganing, I'm not sure. The oldest cousin, who was between me and my younger sister in age, took a tumble and broke her arm so badly it had to be pinned.

– Tracy Kasaboski • 60+ years in the area

I was there with the Jackrabbits and saw Jackrabbit Johansenn. My son Jay was in Jackrabbits but is not in that photo although many of his age group are. Robert de Abreu went on to excel in many X-C ski competitions. We are so fortunate to have the Four Seasons Conservancy trails to enjoy and that there are so many volunteers to help in the maintenance of these trails, not only in winter. With the recent high winds, many trees have fallen across the trails, and people walk and bike on them when the snow is gone, so a crew of chainsaw helpers has been kept busy clearing these. Ann Serdula

*– Ann Serdula, on the Four Seasons Conservatory Cross Country Ski Trails
• 60+ years in the area*

The Ski Hill, easily accessible by trails from the west side of town, was a great centre of activity for everyone, particularly kids. The boys would make great jumps at the side of The Shoot and fly out on to Mambo until longtime ski patroller Marilyn Lemon put a stop to their activities by making them flatten out the jump. But when Marilyn was not on duty, another jump would appear..... In our day, there had to be a very sharp turn to the lift at the bottom of the runs to avoid going into the river which might not be frozen at the edge. Another treat was skating on Black Duck Lake (Pond?) between Christmas and New Year's when it had frozen but no snow had yet wrecked the clear ice. Then there was Hill Park. Local dads were on a roster to clear the rink at the top the town had flooded. The hill was great for young skiers' practice runs. (and there was the occasional jump on the steeper Macdonald side). John Hilborn invented a dangerous sport. He constructed a sort of wind

surfer sail which he attached to himself and went swooping up the frozen River on skates.

– Charlotte McWilliam • 50+ years in the area

John Hilborn is an innovator. I worked for him in the winter of 1973. During that winter John used a surf boarding sail to travel to his property at Oiseau Bay Resort and he used down hill skis rather than skates to cross the Ottawa River at Pointe au Batemme. Myself and Camille Boucher, the caretaker, kept our fingers crossed for John.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

I'm pretty sure this photo was in the community centre, under the direction of Jack Cropley. I remember the arena when the arena was an open arena at the top of toboggan hill, Hill Park, beside the scout hall. We usually had to shovel off the rink in tandem with 30 " push snow shovels. When we moved to the covered arena, they covered the bottom with newspapers before the first flood because there was no concrete floor. I only remember one year that there was an early thaw and we were unable to finish the hockey playoffs. Walking home from the arena from a night game at 30 below was never fun. .

– Sanford Atkins • in the area from 1946-1967

February of 1986 saw the Winter Carnival in Deep River. The residents of Sheridan Court used the central green space as a snow sculpture tribute to the Cabbage Patch Kids who were the craze at that time. The Court was renamed Cabbage Patch Court and the sculptures won first prize in the competition. The sculptures unfortunately did not survive the March thaw. Jim and Rose Ungrin

– Jim & Rose Ungrin • 50+ years in the area





Photos: Jim & Rose Ungrin

Deep River used have a terrific Winter Carnival in the 50,s 60,s &70,s. It brought the whole area into a common celebration during a long cold winter. Look what we,ve done to Mother Earth. She will punish our collective abusive behaviour as so called rulers of the Earth.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

The two winter memories that stand out to me revolve around hockey. I have fond memories of wandering over to the little backyard rink that Gib James made every winter and playing shinny with a tennis ball with the neighbourhood boys. The games went on for hours both week nights and weekends. The other warm memory is of climbing on the laminated beams of the old barn hockey rink and cheering on the Deep River Rockets on Friday nights as they played home games.

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

Extreme Weather

1980 was not a good year to be job-hunting and by late in the year I needed a job - *badly*. So much so that when I came up from Southern Ontario in late November to be interviewed for a position at CRNL, I really didn't notice the size of the snowbanks along the Plant Road. When I moved up here in mid-December, it was -30 C. I thought I had escaped those winters in Southern Ontario. But I was glad to come here and be employed.

– Anonymous contributor, on Area Origins • 30+ years in the area

I arrived in Deep River in March 1959, I was 22 and had just come from a job at St. Georges Hospital in London, at that time located kitty corner across from Hyde Park Corner. Easter was early that year and another resident of the Staff Hotel gave me a ride to Ottawa for the weekend. On Easter Sunday morning I went to Mattin's at the Anglican church on Elgin street. I was reduced to tears of laughter. All the ladies were in high heeled boots, fur coats, or heavy winter coats and fur muffs and Easter hats with artificial flowers or bows. There was snow the like of which I had never seen in England piled everywhere.

– Elizabeth Ells • in the area since 1959

We lived in a war six. No basement. No insulation. Heated with a coal heater and then a stove oil heater in the living room. Ice on the walls and you never went bare footed in the winter lol. We used to walk to st Mary's and play hockey all day. Then walk home with our skates on. Mom would prop us on the couch with our feet close to the heater. We screamed as our feet thawed out against that heater. I can still remember even as kids we were taught to prime and light that thing. Almost burned the house down a few times. And I remember dad taking the storm windows off in the spring and installing screens. Then reversal of that in the fall. One bath, no shower. All three boys used the same bath water lol. I was the middle boy so wasn't too bad. But I can still remember the huge parties thrown in our house. All the early residents were young and everyone drank and they all smoked. Forty people in our small house all smoking at the same time. Houses were allocated by your position at the plant. My dad was clerical so we were given a w6 like all the other blue collar workers. But it was great. Hundreds of kids. Lots to do to keep us busy. Wonderful memories.

– Anonymous contributor • in the area since early 1950s on and off

Hurricane Hazel, 1955, Destroyed thousands of trees in the area and changed the local environment . Many forests were destroyed and may never recover due to the continued cutting of virgin pines in town and the whole of Renfrew county. We have always needed reasonable tree cutting bylaws. BB.

– Brian Burke, on tragedy • 70+ years in the area

I remember Hurricane Hazel in the 50's. A neighbour a street over on Silvie had their roof split in half by a falling tree. But I also remember something occurring at the same time and that was a pair of early teen boys running away from home. They made it to Montreal before they were tracked down and returned home.

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

For many years we listened to the CBC radio weather forecast that followed the 7am news every weekday morning. It ran right across Northern Ontario with, to me a Brit, the very romantic names of Red Lake ,Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, Ear Falls, Sioux Lookout, Smooth Rock Falls, White Lake, and other like minded names. What I remember being fascinated by was how the weather moved across the huge land mass. Weather that was in Red Lake on Monday was , so to speak, in Sioux Lookout on Tuesday and so on until by the end of the week it arrived in Deep River. I also watched to see which coat my husband wore to work, then I knew how to dress the kids for their trek to school. Even after 60 years It still astonishes me when the weather is colder at noon than in the early morning. The radio weather forecast started our days. I have not checked the geography just picked names that were so romantic in some random order.

– Elizabeth Ells • in the area since 1959

The Christmas dances that were held by the Technicians and Technologists from AECL were always special affairs with wonderful bands. They were often held in Pembroke because the venues were larger. The dances were very crowded, were beautifully decorated and were lots of fun. Everyone dressed up in their best, fancy clothes. In those days we also drank and drove home afterwards, sometimes in very bad weather where you couldn't see the road edges for the snow. But in later years the union supplied a bus for anyone who wanted a ride. For some reason that I can't remember, one year the dance was held at the Pembroke arena with boards laid over the ice. It was so cold that we had to keep our coats on for most of the time and our feet were freezing in our "dancing" shoes, so we tried dancing in our winter boots. We attended these T&T dances yearly from the late 1970s until we retired in 1998. New Years Eve dances at the Legion were a great way to welcome the New Year. One year almost all the door prizes were won by people at our table. Another dance that was really fun was held every year in February after the Cross-country ski races. These were also very popular outings and very crowded because the races attracted people from all over Ontario. For a few years in the late 1970s and early 1980s there were Oktoberfest dances held at the arena. There was lots of Gemutlichkeit while we pranced around to the German oompah music. I still have two souvenir beer mugs from the 1980 and 81 fests. Dances were held for any reason and it was a fun way to enjoy times with friends.

– Marilyn Charbonneau • 60+ years in the area

“Winter had such high snow, I remember one year [the snowbanks] were almost up to the roof. If the rooves were not too far apart and there was enough snow, you could walk house-to-house. There were snow days, but the snow had to be really really deep. I think now there's more dangers we're aware of.”

– Geraldine Miller, transcribed from interview • 60+ years in the area

Boy, does this bring back a memory... Mid March 1969...12 years old. The river is still '_visibly_' frozen over, so myself and two buddies (Randy and Terry) decide to load up our toboggans and venture across to the Quebec side. After-all, what could possibly go wrong?! // We all 3 carried broken hockey stick shafts (blades missing) similar to what we'd seen explorers in pictures carrying

and using for prodding and support (had to look / feel the part...we we're going on our own little 'expedition'). I took the lead with the other two trailing close behind. Initially the ice under the snow covered surface felt firm and solid. As we proceeded to cross the river I kept prodding the surface in front of me...all good. // Between 1/3 and 1/2 way across the river as we neared the middle, we started to notice some darker patches where it appeared the snow (and / or ice) may have started to melt a bit. We stayed clear of them and proceeded on. Just as we were approaching the 1/2 way mark I prodded the ice in front of me when suddenly the stick penetrated the ice. Immediately water started to breach the surface and slowly spread to the surrounding snow. I stopped dead in my tracks as my heart pounded faster than it ever had before. // I could hear my two companions behind me let out a terrified yell, then turn and start to run. I immediately yelled, "_STOP RUNNING _you @\$%! GET ON YOUR BELLY's AND PULL YOUR SLEDS!" As I was yelling I slowly retraced a couple of my steps while turning and getting down on my stomach. I laid motionless for a few seconds taking in what just happened, and then slowly started to crawl as flat to the ground as I could distribute my weight. // After we all three crawled for some distance and felt safe to do so, we stood, looked at each other in stunned silence and then kept heading for shore. Seemed like the longest walk in the world. // Long story short, even though we all vowed to 1) never to attempt that again that late in the winter and 2) never to say a word to anyone, I somehow managed to let it slip out the next morning as our family (mom, dad, sister and younger brothers) were in the family car approaching the church parking lot for Sunday morning service. If I could describe the look on Dad's face when he heard what nearly happened, I felt certain I was going to need God's divine intervention to spare me the thrashing I soundly deserved for being such a fool..!

– Winston Stairs • in the area from September 1967 to July 1971

Deep River used have a terrific Winter Carnival in the 50,s 60,s &70,s. It brought the whole area into a common celebration during a long cold winter. Look what we,ve done to Mother Earth. She will punish our collective abusive behaviour as so called rulers of the Earth.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

snow! Not a real issue. Every last week of January we could count on -40F for a week or more and I remember -55F one January. Aint gonna happen again in our lifetime. Snow no matter how much was just dealt with.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

I grew up in Chalk River and as a young teen was always ready to take on some part time work to make a few dollars to supplement my allowance. Fortunately for a few of us, the CPR provided some cash flow specially in the winters as "snow gang" workers. Mr. Scott Dag senior...father of the younger Scott and Tim Dagg...often hired a few of us to clear snow from between the railroad switches during heavy winter storms...the pay was fantastic for that time period and as young teenagers we had a lot of laughs and even developed some muscle from the exercise...fond memories for sure.

– Anonymous contributor • 19 years in the area

My cousins hailed from London, Ontario, so they seemed mostly to notice mosquitoes and blackflies, next to no shopping, and the size of the trees. That was in the 1970s, but I'd guess not many would say much has changed. The bugs might be a little less ferocious and plentiful in the town limits, and many of the old white pines along the river are gone, but there are even fewer stores now than there were then. Once, at one of the beaches, a group of visitors asked a friend of ours where they should go to pay. They found it hard to believe the access to such beautiful sandy beaches complete with picnic tables, washrooms and bbqs was free.

– Tracy Kasaboski, on visitors from the area • 60+ years in the area

“[in the summer] We wore hats; everybody had a hat on! It was good that we had the knowledge to know about the rays of the sun, especially in the country, or working in the fields. [Deep River] was educated and they knew more than the average person that wasn't in the labs experimenting, and you believed what they said. ... You should have a wide-brimmed hat, especially over the face and nose.”

– Geraldine Miller, transcribed from interview • 60+ years in the area

Trees

Having lived, mainly on Josie Lane for some 75 yrs, the notable change has been the thoughtless cutting of our local forests and the ridiculous cutting of white pine trees in Deep River. The town has little regard for the virgin pines that remain. Example is the cutting of the virgin pine across from the LCBO. Another disaster was the cutting of a perfectly good monster pine at the corner of Brockhouse Way and Beech Streets. The physical appearance of our town has been diminished by the cutting of perfectly sound pine trees particularly. No reason and no sense in cutting down good healthy trees. Overall Renfrew County continues to have its crown lands as well as private forests ruined by over cutting. Immediate effects are very few animals or birds in our area. Fire traps, by past and current cutting of the forest, are in everyone's neighbourhoods. Hold on for the result this summer of 2024 because fires will devastate all of Canada this summer. We have not had winter but more of a prolonged Spring. Plant some trees. -Brian Burke.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

Hi Naomi I have written an account below of a significant tree in Bill Rounding Park, formerly Grouse Park:

The once famous stately pine tree in Bill Rounding Park (formerly Cedar Park). Did you know there is a pine tree in Bill Rounding Park that once had its own website? It is a beautiful mature pine that stands near the entrance to the park from Beach Avenue, in the north west corner just as you come out of the brush into the open field. One day someone discovered a pink band of paint had been sprayed round the trunk of the tree. They decided right there and then that the tree must be designated for removal and naturally they were outraged. So what do you do when you're outraged? You set up a petition to try to stop it. That is exactly what the person did. They created a website to invite locals to sign a petition registering their outrage at the proposed removal of the tree. It was a great idea.....except that the tree was not slated for removal at all. The tree was however marked to ensure that it was not abused in any way as it was getting older and needed protecting. A few years before this, during a Summerfest, a dance group called Dusk Dancers had set up a swing on a large

limb of the tree and were swinging from it as part of their performance. Deep River Council had since organized a safety audit of all the large trees in the community and needed to ensure that such activities were avoided in the future in order to ensure that the tree continued to thrive. But the outraged citizen who thought that the marking meant that the tree was destined for removal didn't ask the staff in town hall what the marking indicated. It all turned out for the best as the tree is still standing and thriving and it is gratifying to know that our community looks out for our special natural environment with such passion.

– Mary McCafferty • in the area for many years

“The Hanging Tree” as seen from the post office:

– John Fleurie • in the area since 1977



Photo: John Fleurie

Most trees, in my thinking, are essential to our survival. Deep River along with thousands of other communities are willing to destroy perfectly healthy trees because some person thinks it is the right thing to do. Two White Pines were cut down in the last 10 years, one at the corner of Beach and Deep River road and one across from the LCBO on the corner of Deep River Road. Both trees were over 200 years old and in perfect health. Both trees were destroyed for what appears cosmetic concerns by either the property owners or town council. There are only a few trees left of that size and if they are destroyed then the further beauty of White Pines in Deep River will be gone for ever.

– Brian Burke • 70+ years in the area

The trees that are still standing, I hope, are the Memorial Trees on the Silver Spoon trails. AECL in the early '90's put the land up for sale and it was feared a developer would come in. To preserve the area there was a door-to-door campaign to raise money to buy the property. Ray Metcalfe was much involved. The committee, in return for a sum depending on the location and size of the tree, would place a plaque on the tree stating whatever the donor requested. Other trees I recall that crashed in major storms were massive pines. Frontenac Crescent was one area devastated. In the 1980's great pines, both white and red, on the then properties of the Oshiers, Svennsens, Klocks, Lanes, et al came thundering down, but no lives were lost and the houses saved.

– Charlotte McWilliam • 50+ years in the area

Greetings. I have been enjoying the emails from you with all the memories they bring back. The latest one, Memorable Houses, has a photo of my old house at 17 Beach Avenue. The Gilbert family moved into that house when the Keyes moved out to their new log home. I don't recall the year but we were there for at least most of my high school days and I graduated in 1960. I suppose that we qualified for it because my father, Fred Gilbert, had worked his way up the ladder of seniority and also because he had a large family to house. There were 5 children and the house was a big one so that occasionally one got to have a room of one's own. The best part was the location. It was on the river overlooking the beach where we spent all our time in the summer. At dinner time, my mom would send the dog to get us or honk an old horn from the back.

Even if we didn't hear the horn, others would and they would let us know we had to head for home. Now then, you can see the tree at the back In the photo. That grew considerably over the years and sloped out towards the river. It was our "climbing" tree and we and our friends spent many hours up in that tree. The family moved from this house to Pinawa in 1963, the year that I graduated from nursing and so I did not get to visit it again as an adult. I regret that lost connection to Deep River and my life there from 1945 - 1963, so your publication is filling quite a void for me and I am truly grateful. As Old Blue Eyes would say, "Thanks for the memories"!

– Lynne Bigg • in the area from 1945 to 1963

If I had to pick only one thing, it is easy for me to choose the big white pines at centennial rock. They leave a huge whole that cannot be replaced.

– Hilary Veen, on what she misses most • 40+ years in the area

The Forestry

In 1972 the centre pillar of the bridge in Petawawa failed causing the bridge to sag and making it unusable. This was the only highway bridge over the Petawawa River and handled all the Highway 17 east and west traffic. We in Deep River were therefore cut off from any town or city east of Base Petawawa. There were two alternative roads to get to eastern Ontario. One by traveling via North Bay, then south and east through Algonquin Park to Barry's Bay and then north to Pembroke. The second was to use an unimproved gravel and dirt road,, which had a small bridge over the Petawawa River, through the Forestry to the Achray Road and then east to Pembroke. All this happened just before my son Blaine's birthday and I had promised him a new tricycle which was to be purchased in Pembroke. So, not wanting to disappoint my son and take the long route through the Park, I headed to the Petawawa Forestry complex, just east of Chalk River, and commenced to make my way south on a very rough stone and gravel road. over the small Petawawa River bridge and on the Achray Road and Pembroke. The whole trip took much longer than the usual trip to Pembroke. I purchased the trike and headed back the same way. The trike was much appreciated even though the whole trip through the Foretry was not.

– Hardy Philippi • 64 years in the area

I worked at the Petawawa National Forestry Institute, as it was called then, from around 1983 until it closed. I was one of the last people still working there, as it was part of my job to arrange for the shipping of lab equipment and supplies to the other "sister" sites around Canada. The Forestry was a wonderful place to work. Not only was the setting spectacular, nestled like a tiny village along the shores of Corry Lake and surrounded by bush, but because we were a relatively small group - about 135 staff, I think, plus summer students - we felt very much like members of an extended family, or at least that was my perception, and one that was echoed time and again by others who worked there. On the day the Director, Boyd Case, stood in the auditorium meeting room and told us the government of the hour had decided to close us down, people cried. It was a place you cared about, and the staff were people you cared about. The news of the closure came as a bit of a shock to most of the staff because we'd recently been visited by the Assistant Deputy

Minister who'd professed to be impressed by the site and the work being done at PNFI. We had state of the art labs and a cryogenics seed project that was gathering and storing seed from all over the world and a forest fire research section among many other areas of research, but most importantly and what would ensure our continued existence, we all felt, was the presence of the forest itself. A whole research forest, established years before and backed up by a large nursery, something that other sites lacked. After all, you could only do so much with a computer model. How wrong we were. In spite of singing our praises on the day of her visit, the ADM, or perhaps someone above her, swung the axe and we were to be closed in an effort at fiscal responsibility. So too was one of our sister sites in Newfoundland. It seemed to me a horrible thing to do to two regions of the country that desperately needed the jobs and whose surrounding municipalities would suffer from the losses, as opposed to the sites that remained open, most of which were located in much larger centres like Edmonton, Victoria, and Ottawa, places that would hardly blink with the removal of 100 jobs. In the end, Newfoundland got a reprieve. We were not so lucky. Support staff were laid off. Researchers kept their jobs but were dispersed across the country along with their labs. To the very valid and important point that we could not be closed because of the research forests, the government responded by employing a skeleton staff to maintain the site. Nonetheless, it made for an unhappy and bitter time. To make matters even worse, the government in their wisdom allowed for no further development on what one would have thought would have been a rather lucrative site, with fibre optics (almost unheard of in a rural setting at the time), modern buildings (some only recently built), a biomass burner system that provided heat for the entire complex, an equipped carpentry shop, a sewer treatment plant, motel and apartment-like accommodations for visiting researchers and students, a fully serviced kitchen and cafeteria facility, a mechanic shop that serviced a fleet of vehicles, among other buildings. A rumour went around that a Toronto company had bid to establish something on the site, but the government would only give them a 2-year lease, so the company backed out. The main site was completely razed, and when I finally drove through 10 years or more after the closure, there was no evidence of the once bustling village. Every building had been removed. I canoed past a few years ago, but couldn't see the smallest hint of where the lakeside pavilion had been where we'd had fun staff parties, laughing and playing music, or the dock where small boats were tethered, or the paved road had been that I used to walk on every lunch hour with a co-worker, passing a field of pink and purple lupins. It was as if it had never existed. What was the point of so complete an erasure? I know it sounds a bit melodramatic, but there was a sadness to the way PNFI ended, and years

after, when I ran into others who'd worked there, people expressed the same sentiment of having been through something almost traumatic together. The Forestry had been a fixture in the Valley since the first decade of the 20th century. Families used to live onsite. There had once been houses strung along the shore of Corry Lake where researchers, their spouses and children all lived, and although most of the houses weren't lived in by the time I started working there in the 1980s, I'd known people who lived in them. A curious idea, to live right where you work, but yet another thing that made the place so unique. It's too bad that the almost 14 years I spent there are overshadowed by the way things ended, because I have lots of great memories of the people I worked with or knew. For my sake and theirs (most were happy in their jobs and didn't want to move away, in fact some moved back here at the end of their careers), I wish the belt tightening of the 90s had translated into something a little less dramatic than the almost complete eradication of such a historic, important, and all-around great place to work.

– Tracy Kasaboski • 60+ years in the area

Our family came in 1968, my sister and I were 6 and 3 respectively. My parents were immigrants from the Netherlands and my dad had just completed forest ranger school in Dorset, Ontario. He got a job at the Petawawa Forest Research Station as it was then called, (the current Petawawa Research Forest). Even though there are no buildings there now, at its height it employed a few hundred people and had several buildings and living accommodations for staff. We were on a waiting list for a house in Deep River for a few years.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

Reflections on the past, that is my hobby now. For me, the big change is the loss of our Petawawa National Forest Research Institute (PNFI). It was a true center of activity with 70 scientist and support staff. It was recognized international. We had a special Hotel where people could stay. We had a cafeteria where people could eat. I worked in the new building that studied "Tree Breeding" that was never done before in Canada. I remember my boss Mark Holst who was hired and came from Denmark. All the buildings disappeared and nature now takes over. Also the forest is still there with its permanent sample plots. Good memories.

– John Veen • in the area since 1968

In the early 50s our family picnicked in the Forestry mostly with another family the Howell's. I remember going out there every weekend in the summer, particularly at Montgomery Lake. I vaguely remember there being the remnants of a POW camp out there. We would often run into other Deep River families while we were out there.

– Ken Ahronson • 80+ years in the area

Hi Elizabeth

My grandfather (Gaedeon Boudreau) worked for the Forestry later in his work life. He would leave Mackey on Sunday evening (travelling by bus), staying all week at the staff house, returning to Mackey on the following Friday. This was summertime work as he mostly weeded the gardens of the various tree plantations. All went well until the bosses discovered that my grandfather was 67 years old, and retirement was mandatory once one turned 65 years old. He was advised that he could no longer work at the Forestry and had to go home and stay home. My grandfather was devastated as he felt that he could do this type of work forever, and he had always worked hard either on the farm, or in the bush. To my memory he never did work anywhere else for money after he left the Forestry. Take care David

– Dave Balla-Boudreau • in the area for most of his life

Special Places

Many of us early settlers remark about the chemical hazards that were omnipresent in our childhood lives in the company town. We were surrounded by asbestos wrapped pipes at Hill House and the old Community Centre. We chewed roofing tar as a bizarre treat. As well we loved following the mosquito fogging machine running through the DDT mist for many blocks as it meandered through town. We chased each other throwing used condoms picked up off the playing field on the downtown campus and at Sheik Lane. Sheik Lane was a name that was given to what I believe was Deep River's first Lovers Lane. It was an old trail that the earliest teens drove in to where they could have the privacy needed to be romantic. My peer group I believe came up with the name. Sheik at the time was the name of the most popular condom on the market. The lane was littered many mornings with used condoms. Sheik Lane was located just south of the Balmer's Bay road almost opposite from the new hospital. As young kids we would also walk down the lane, (it was a dead end) to get to our forts in the bush that has become the Four Seasons Trail.

– Ken Ahronson, on health & safety • in the area since 1946

I remember climbing Mt. Martin several times in the late 20th century. The first time was when two dads carried their toddlers piggy-back up the trail. Another was when a kind couple sunning on the beach kept our ailing Larador retriever with them while we climbed. A third was when we canoed across, went up the Chayenne, bushwhacked, and got lost. Fortunately, we made it back to the canoes, but not to the top of Mt Martin. Was there not an attempt by John Hilborn to cut a trail down the back on the north side? There were various tales of kids and the transmission tower which I have forgotten.

– Charlotte McWilliam • 50+ years in the area

Rabbit Rock, the little island-like bump of granite between Darwin Crescent and Hillcrest, was a favourite green spot for me and my sisters. Although in fact it's more grey than green, being a rock, but there's moss and it's surrounded by trees and it's secluded. We never played together there as we were just a bit too old for that, but it was a solitary spot we all liked to frequent individually. A treed enclosure where the rock would be warm on a sunny day

and a person could sit and enjoy being alone. Maybe with a book, and a squirrel or two. Sometimes with a friend. It felt so iconic to my sister Kristen and I that we named our tiny publishing company Rabbit Rock Press, and any of the books we've published ourselves bear that name in honour of this special place in Deep River.

– *Tracy Kasaboski • 60+ years in the area*

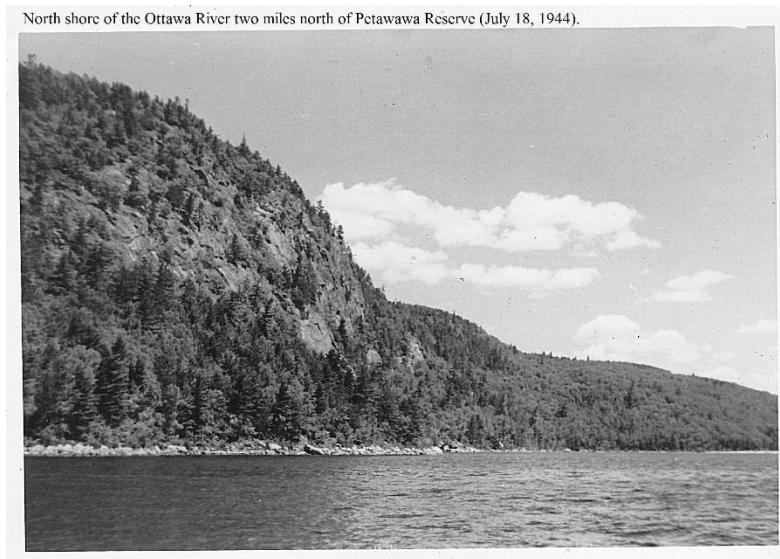


Photo: 1944 Land Survey

In the 80s I lived on Sumac Court in the east end of town which, because it's mainly circular, doesn't offer much in terms of places to walk. So, I quickly discovered Rabbit Rock, just around the corner on Hillcrest.

It's a unique outcrop of smooth grey rock, a few steps from the road, and surrounded by native trees and bushes, including bright red Sumac in the fall. A couple of paths disappear from the top and lead down through the small forest to Newton Crescent, which curves around the rocky area. The story is that in the early days of the town someone saw a rabbit sitting on top of the rock, so that became its name.

Kids are particularly drawn to Rabbit Rock and enjoy exploring the hidden area and other kid-sized rocks around it. In winter they can slide on small sleds and plastic sliders down one of the snowy paths through the trees.

I have family videos of my three-year-old daughter Susan squealing with delight as she slides down the gentle slope in her warm grey and pink snow suit, then appeals to 'go again!'

Fast forward 40-years to today and my youngest son Ian, born after Susan died in 1984, takes his three young sons to clamber over Rabbit Rock whenever they visit from Kingston. Ian remembers the adventures he had there while growing up in Deep River and the name 'Rabbit Rock' immediately conjures up images of a unique place his sons want to see and explore whenever they come to visit.

– Larrie Thomson • in the area since 1972

As a youth it was a summer ritual to row or paddle across the river to hike up Mt Martin. In the early days there was an observation station on top of a tower on top of Mt Martin, but that enclosure was removed, while leaving the tower itself. In my late 40's or early 50's I climbed up to the top of the tower to take a couple of pictures, one up river and one down river. I was so nervous climbing up and down, I was shaking like a leaf, both going up and down. I didn't remember being so nervous climbing the tower in my youth. // My last full summer in Deep River (age 19), four of us (Geoff Cox, Marty Kusluski, Erin Cull and I) camped out on the shore at the bottom of Mt Martin. I walked across the beach to go into the bush to attend to a daily function. As I got to the edge of the bush, I looked up, and there, 10 feet away, was a black bear, standing up, looking at me. I slowly backed away, back to our camp. He kept coming toward our camp (for our food). We quickly packed up and rowed out of there.

– Sanford Atkins • in the area from 1946-1967

I have photos taken in 1966 when the fire tower and observation cabin were atop Mt. Martin, and a photo taken in 1993 when the tower was still there with no cabin on top. Our family used to make a trip to climb Mt. Martin around Thanksgiving weekend for many years. The tower was dismantled some time after 1993 so it was disappointing not to be able to see it from town. I have no idea why it is named Mt. Martin.

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

My best memories of Mount Martin was being able to view the 'mountain' from my parents bedroom window ('67-'71), through my underpowered, compact 4 X 30 binoculars. I was fascinated by the fire tower on top of the mount and what it would be like to climb up and take in the surrounding view... something unfortunately, I never had a chance to do before the tower was taken down. // However, many years later (Oct. 1, 2023) I managed to take the attached photo of Jupiter (just to the right of the Mt.) and the moon rising above the Mt. Martin. (* The picture was subsequently published in the October 11th issue of the NRT *).

– *Winston Stairs • in the area from September 1967 to July 1971*

Several years ago, I was also interested in how Mount Martin got its name. See the attached screen shot of a page from the book “Deep Waters: The Ottawa River and Canada’s Nuclear Adventure” by Kim Krenz.

– *Chris MacCready • most of his life in the area*

Though we spend most summers at our cottage, Mt. Martin has always beckoned to be hiked. On our first climb, my husband carried our three-year-old on his shoulders. The last trip I recall was canoeing across from farther west. We beached our canoes and thought we could bushwhack to the trail. We did not succeed, but found a ledge to which to admire the view before scrambling down. The river had become much rougher for our return paddle! The panorama was always awesome from the top, though we never allowed the kids to climb the fire tower. Those are my memories. There are other sadder stories, but they are not mine tell.

– *Charlotte McWilliam on “Indian Point” • 50+ years in the area*

When our kids were young we often went to Indian Point in our boat and would swim and picnic there. On a nice day, there would be many other boats there and my husband often referred to it as “Coney Island” because it got rather crowded sometimes. We also climbed up the path to the old fire tower before it was dismantled in the 1990’s. We always tried to go at Thanksgiving because the fall colours would be so spectacular then. We had always been a little

scared to climb up the fire tower but when our daughter's new boyfriend joined us one year (probably the last year before the tower disappeared) he was a good climber and he went up so some of us got up enough courage to try it.

– Ann Serdula • 60+ years in the area

Mt Martin was named after who? The major land mark in the area!

– Brian Burke on Mount Martin • 70+ years in the area

Indian Point was indeed special, I did walk across to Indian Point on one occasion in the winter. It was scary so once was enough. In the summer it was such a relaxing environment. I also did climb up the mountain to the tower at least once. When the Deep River Blues hosted a touring rugby club from Wales, Indian Point was one of the party venues. Club members ferried our guests and wives over there and Stu Mark took all those who wanted up in his aircraft to give our Welsh friends a look at our amazing landscape. The Welsh were absolutely enchanted by our amazing playground.

– Ken Ahronson • 80+ years in the area

Many years ago, in the 1970s, Beth and Gene Critoph, well-known past residents of town, told me they had visited a Toronto exhibition of new city and town layouts and were impressed with photos of a unique plan featuring a reversal of the traditional street layouts with houses facing the street.

The plan showed garages fronting the paved streets, with houses behind looking out at an uninterrupted view of wooded green spaces. The houses had direct access to these green spaces so they promised to be calmer and quieter than houses looking out onto a street with traffic.

The Critophs were surprised when they realised the exhibition photo they were looking at was taken just across the street from their Newton Crescent home in the east end of Deep River, the unique layout being between Glendale, Maple and Birch streets.

The two protected green spaces there encourage birds and even animals. Each has a set of walking paths that provide shortcuts between Hillcrest and Glendale avenues. The forested paths are not straight, but curved, which provides changing views of the homes, trees, bushes and foliage as one walks along.

– Larrie Thomson • in the area since 1972

In the 80s I would push my three-year-old daughter Susan through these pathways which, for some unknown reason, I called ‘elf paths’ to entertain her. She loved going to the ‘elf paths’ on her little pink tricycle and would peer under each low bush, hoping to see an elf herself.

My three grandsons, now aged 6, 8 and 10, always want to explore these elf paths whenever they visit from Kingston.

Imagine my surprise and pleasure when the family of the late Archie Robertson moved into town a few years ago, just across the street from one of the elf paths, and set out dozens of colourful gnomes and elves on their front lawn, gathered around an elaborate elf village in the corner. A little sign says it’s ‘Kelvindale.’

My three grandsons insist on walking through the elf paths to Kelvindale every time they visit, to see what elves and gnomes have been added since their last visit. We all love those elves and the elf paths!

– Larrie Thomson • in the area since 1972



Photo: Larrie Thomson

Going to Indian Point and usually at the same time, Mount Martin, was a very common outing for many Deep River-ites. During the 1970's and 80's it was usual to encounter many families ascending or descending the mountain on a Saturday or Sunday all through the summer and fall. The fire tower was still in place, which made for an exciting climb and viewpoint. It seems amazing now that the fire tower was open for the public to climb it at all times. Indian point was a very busy place, with a playground and picnic tables, full of families, children and boats of all kinds. I don't think the current ecological reserve was in place yet, for people roamed all over the beach and up the river. Camping and campfires was also common. I remember getting into a canoe with friend from a young age (maybe even 11 or 12) and going over for the day. I don't think a summer would go by without visiting both these places for many residents, it seemed as if they were an extension of Deep River.

– Hilary Veen, on the Pembroke-Mattawa road • 40+ years in the area

Question is, why does Deep River not have a theatre when Mattawa, half the population, has one? Any way I commend the O'Reagan and Cowan families for making the Strand a success for so long. However my most awesome memory is coming out of the Strand on a sultry summer Saturday night and watching the Night Hawks beep and circle as they gobbled up insects. I do miss the Night Hawks. BB

– Brian Burke, on the Strand theatre • 70+ years in the area

The Mattawa road for me is the road between the Double Dip ski hill parking lot and Mcanulty road. This road is not maintained and I still love to drive it because it is such a bush road and it is kind of silly to drive it, I think the holes are so deep now, that I will finally have to give up driving it, but I'll still bike it. I realise that all the lanes off the highway between Deep River and Rolphton: Brouse Road, Allan Road, McKinley Drive, Lance Road, Lau-ren Road are all part of the old Mattawa road.

– Hilary Veen, on the Pembroke-Mattawa road • 40+ years in the area

Yes. Our family farm was along the Pembroke-Mattawa Road part of which is now called Burke's Road. This road was used extensively because the Oiseau Steamer would dock at Pt. Alexander with cargo and/or pick up passengers for moonlight excursions to Des Joachims. Point Alexander is the sandy/rocky point at Burke's Beach. Cheers, BB.

– Brian Burke, on the Pembroke-Mattawa road • 70+ years in the area



Looking southeast from Indian Point town site. (July 19, 1944).

Photo: 1944 Land Survey

Childhood

I think growing up in Deep River during the 1970's and 1980's has ruined me for the rest of my life. My childhood was such a fairytale fantasy that now the world seems too much of a dark place. Firstly, I could walk or bike everywhere; to the downtown core where there was such a diverse array of shops for a kid to explore in and even a movie theatre. Since I was 5 years old, I could explore on my own or with friends, the freedom. To go to the beach, or into the woods, the creeks and streams. Every house had a household of kids in it, so there were so many activities to take part in, and clubs. It was the peak time of this town. The school was so full of kids, there was always a tribe to join, mine was the band, there were 4 to join, including a Dixieland band, a stage band and 2 concert bands. It took me decades to realize how unique and special my growing up years were in this town and everyone of my cohort, when we run into each other now, all exclaim how we have this in common, a sort of bond.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

Growing up in the 70's and 80's it wasn't isolating in the way of feeling isolating, but the drive to Ottawa, and still driving through Petawawa, Pembroke, Renfrew and Arnprior, it was a much longer drive and seemed like a big deal as a family, so we didn't do it that often. The Petawawa plains seemed like a psychological and geographical barrier to going east to Pembroke and we had everything we needed here (many more stores and activities for children, many more children) and going west towards North Bay was just never done for some reason - that direction was just woods. So maybe not isolated, but I felt we were more of an island.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

Wylie Road was where we drove to get the best corn in the valley grown by Mr. Rathwell. As young tweens or teens we would go into the bush on the east side of Wylie to build forts and hang out. Ken

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

I canoed across the river with a friend when I was 11 to Indian Point and had a fire to roast our hotdogs. We were gone all day into adventures in the woods as kids, our parents had no idea where we were or what we were doing. Since we were 10 or so we'd get on our bikes and to go into the woods to play in various creeks, and falls.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area



Outfall from Perch Lake Basin

Photo: AECL

Upon reading the memory vault question this week, about any community tragedy that has happened, the first thing that comes to mind, is I can't remember one. My childhood was pretty idealic and secure, almost surreal now. I was free to run and play wherever I wanted and always felt safe wherever I was. Deep River almost felt like an island on it's own that way.

Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

Geographically the connection between settlements/communities was dictated by the Ottawa River. Consequently settlers would have followed the River then the railroad. In between the two major transport corridors you have farming development along the Chalk River. Gerald Nadeau's farm, originally the Kean homestead, is the best soil for farming in the area. Settlement took place where the soil was better than sand or the original forests still remained. The Wylie Road was the original connection between Chalk River and Pt. Alexander by way of Lamure Road and Josie Lane. Most of my parents' family and friends lived along the Wylie road right to Chalk River. My father was adopted by his aunt Mrs. Gleason who already had 12 children. He grew up on that farm. She also ran the local Post Office. McCarthy's farm was the local place of worship for Catholics before a church was built near the golf course, initially Walkers' Farm. Not the same Walker family across from the Dairy. There was a school at Paddy O'Gorman's but little evidence of that now. My parent's friends were the Adam's families, Moses Lamure, Gleason's, Hogue's, McCarthy's, and Hawley's to name a few original settlers that helped each other out and the main centre was Chalk River. The Railway Station and Dover's General Store were the essential drawing cards before Deep River developed. You can tell by the names that the Irish homesteaders were treated to sandy soil and a tough row to hoe!

– Brian Burke, on the Wylie Road • 70+ years in the area

My childhood was freedom, freedom to roam, freedom to have a life separate from your parents, they didn't know what you were doing, freedom to get hurt, or lost, freedom to explore and experiment and figure things out on your own. Freedom to be in nature whenever you wanted, and walk or bike out the door. Walking to school and coming home for lunch everyday. Waiting at the bus stop for when your father came home. Building forts out of pine needles and going to beach with your friends.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

I remember hearing there were 80 or 90 young kids on Frontenac Crescent. They loved to splash in the ditches after a rain and nobody worried as there were so many mums to keep an eye on them.

– Charlotte McWilliam, on the baby boom • 50+ years in the area

There was the beach where I took swimming lessons and hung out most of the summers most of the time until I started working at Tierney's Drug store. The Tierney brothers were wonderful men to work for. There was the bush - everywhere. We ran through and played there as 5-9 year olds giving the paths names like Lady Slipper Lane, When we were older we played games like Prisoner's Base in the bush. The opportunities provided by AECL to participate in sports, art, and music. If you wanted to do something Deep River had classes to do it. In the summer there were playgrounds in all areas of the town with supervisors who taught us things. One summer we erected teepees or wigwams - whatever the Hurons and Algonquins lived in. I've forgotten details. There was a hill to slide on and my uncle taught me to ski there. There always was an outdoor skating rink with music to skate to. Families went together to skate. My father brought records to play as others did. It was a wonderful place to grow up in. I came back in 1966 and lived there until 1976. I lived in Maple Lodge for a year and met my late husband there, was married there with the dinner in the dining room at Forest Hall and the reception at the Surf Lounge. Both my sons were born there in the old hospital. Deep River was still a great place. According to my best friend for over 65 years who moved back it still is.

– Dick and Dianne Clairoux • in the area from 1947-1961, and 1966-1976

The Fall is my favorite time of the year. Growing up in Deep River the colours are fabulous in the Laurentians showcased across from our downtown campus. High school football was so important to my peer group and I was blessed with enough speed and toughness to perform well for Mackenzie. The smells of broken blades of grass, sweat and fallen leaves at a Friday afternoon football game I still miss to this day. And the excitement of dragging my aching body out into the crisp air of an Autumn Friday evening to a dance at the Christian Education Centre, at the high school gym, or a classmates basement rec room along with a trip to Swisha made the start of the weekend so exciting.

Ken

– Ken Ahronson • in the area since 1946

As a kid we loved to go back in the bush, build forts and make a fire.

– Sanford Atkins • in the area from 1946-1967

I lived on Frontenac cres. - 35 houses and over 60 kids. I was 5 and my sister 7 when we moved in in 1970. You didn't have to go far when all the kids were so close by. Neighbourhood/street games of hide and seek and beckons wanted were nightly affairs in the summer, backyard swing sets were used by all the kids, you would start at one household and make your way around the street. Because our street was a crescent (and many others in town too), we would make forts with the pine needles, and sticks/boughs etc and play in the woods behind the inside row of houses.

– Hilary Veen • 40+ years in the area

This is a perfect question of people of my age (60) because we have so many wonderful memories of growing up in Deep River in the 1970's and 1980's. Many of us grew up on crescents and streets with woods in the back. We would rake all the pine needles into long thin piles making "rooms" and "hallways" of our houses and play house. We would bike around the town to the various playgrounds - when the playground equipment was actually fun to play on because there was some risk associated with it. We would bike down to the end of McAnulty Road and hike into the woods up the hill and down the other side to the creek and play in the creek and little falls. A trip to the "New Idea Store" would be entertaining for a while. We could take (rent?) the windsurf boards on the river at the marina, or go to Lamure Beach or Pine Point Beach on our own. Winter would be sledding on hill park or skating in the outdoor rinks. Going to Double Dip in winter or summer and playing on the hills.

– Hilary Veen, on favourite ways to pass the time • 40+ years in the area

Summer mornings were largely spent down at either Lamure or Pine Point Beach swimming and hanging out with my buddies. In the afternoon's we'd be in the woods building log cabin ('forts') and trying to smoke dried fern leaves crushed and rolled up in notebook paper...nearly choked to death and surprisingly didn't suffer permanent lung damage (_silly fools_)! Wednesday nights I looked forward to skin & scuba diving in

the Petawawa River with members of the Deep River Underwater Club (DRUC) and collecting golf balls from a nearby golf course that found their way in the water. // Aligned with the 'First Snow Carnival' program you've attached below, while I hadn't yet been brought into the world in 1947 (another 10 years to go), I did however attend the 1969 Winter Carnival and 1970 Silver Jubilee (attached). Cheers and Regards, Winston Sta

– Winston Stairs • in the area from September 1967 to July 1971

In the late 40's and early 50's Deep River was referred to as the mosquito/blackfly capital of the world. It may still be. The town sprayed DTD to mitigate it. A truck - as I remember towed a machine behind it. As children we played "War" and would run ahead and lay in the ditches pretending we were in WW1 and being gassed. We did this all summer long. Obviously no adults were alarmed as our parents were aware of it. -Dick and Di

– Dick and Dianne Clairoux • in the area from 1947 to 1961, and 1966 to 1976

Thank You to Our Contributors!

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We would not have been able to do this work without you.