



Forestory

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We want to hear from you!

If you have articles, photographs or images, interesting facts, web links, personal reflections or events that would be suitable for this newsletter, please contact the editor.

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Request for Content

Do you have an interesting story to tell about some aspect of forest history in Ontario? Or are you prepared to write an article for the newsletter on some aspect of forest history? Do you know of interesting photographs, documents, web sites or other items that would be suitable for inclusion in the newsletter? If so, please contact the editor to discuss the possibility of publishing your information in the newsletter.

Please provide your comments to the editor on items or themes you would like to see in the newsletter.

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President's Message

Since my last "Message" to members in the spring issue this year I have a number of items to report. Last winter we embarked on a project to interest young people of high school age in forest history by establishing one or more essay contests on the subject. Two municipalities, Simcoe County and York Region, agreed to participate, with Simcoe County choosing to have the contest in the first part of this year and York Region the latter part. Unfortunately, largely due to the "work to rule" in the secondary school system, the project in Simcoe County aborted. However, I'm pleased to report that the project in York Region is proceeding and we look forward to positive results next spring.

Next year the Society will be entering its fifth year and while we have general statements of our mission and objectives your Directors realized that the organization must look to the future and assess how we may best proceed keeping in mind the experience and lessons from our formative years. To this end during the past months the directors have been preparing and revising a draft Strategic Planning Proposal which will be reviewed at the Board's meeting this December with a view to presentation at the Society's annual meeting on February 20, 2014. This will be a most important meeting, and I hope that as many members as possible will attend.

The Society's accomplishments are entirely the result of voluntary efforts by its members. Outstanding, has been that of the editor of this journal, Sherry Hambly, who has made the publication reach a much wider audience than just our members. For this we are grateful for the excellent and informative articles submitted by members and non-members alike.

Each year I have been able to report on one or more collections that the Society, through its members, has been able to have placed in an appropriate archive. Most recently, Professor Mark Kuhlberg has had the material of the Turnbull family placed in the University of Toronto Archives. Both John Turnbull (2T2) and his son Norman (4T9) were foresters. Further, Mark has had the copies of the KVP Company magazine placed in the Espanola Library.

Just prior to my writing this message I had the pleasure of representing the Society at the 125th Anniversary of the Ontario Historical Society, held in the Lieutenant Governor's quarters at Queen's Park. I can only hope that our Society may have the pleasure of celebrating similarly in the future.

This will be my last message to the membership as Chairman. It has been most rewarding to me to have been involved in the Society's endeavours since it's "birth" as a legal entity five Septembers ago in 2009 – I feel as if I were its midwife! As Past Chair I hope to remain very active in supporting the important work of the Society.

With best wishes to all for the Holiday Season and the New Year and looking forward to seeing as many as possible at our Annual Meeting, on February 20, 2014, at the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston.



Ken Armson RPF
Chair, Forest History Society of Ontario

Editor's Message



Well, late again! Part of the reason is the lingering I did in my garden this fall, putting off until I could no longer, starting the editing process. I was well on my way to finishing the journal in late November when I received an article on the history of the Ontario Forest Ranger School (OFRS). Eventually the author (Lisa Harrison) and I decided to collaborate on this article – a couple of weeks later here we are – I learned lots about the OFRS along the way. This history piece is nicely balanced by the one by Jim Baker and Will Samis, both of whom attended the OFRS in the mid to late 60s. It is interesting how other articles tie into the OFRS history theme – Jim Ruxton and the TV show ‘The Forest Rangers’. For readers who can add more history, either through their own stories or information they have on the place or people who attended, please let me know. When I first googled the school, the names of people who had attended there kept popping up – teachers, town councillors, consultants. It has had quite an impact on the learning experience of many. I was one of them, as you will see later!

I was so pleased to receive an article on Carl E. Atwood. He was a professor of mine during my first year of forestry at the University of Toronto. He had an awesome reputation regarding his knowledge. He was a no-nonsense professor, but had a soft spot for a fellow student, Eric Astley, (who had worked for him as a student). My whole class came to detest Eric that session because of Professor Atwood’s constant, glowing references to him! I was unaware, until this article, of Dr. Atwood’s humble beginnings and rich history working in the bush. I am sorry to report that Dr. Gordon Howse, the co-author of the article on Dr. Atwood, had a bad fall this autumn and was in hospital for some time. I understand he is now back in Sault Ste Marie and recovering. Dr. Howse and I talked about other possible articles related to the history of pest management in Ontario, and I look forward to pursuing those articles with him.

That’s what I really like about this work – I meet so many nice and interesting people, mostly over email, and we chat away over the period of the editing process. But sometimes I get the chance to meet folks in person. Bill Hutchinson was such person – at 83 years of age he looks and acts much younger – and still does hard physical labour on his large plantations, as you will read about later in this issue. I enjoyed our day in his plantations and woodlot very much.

The heavy rains in Toronto this summer caused the end of an icon – the maple tree that inspired the song “Maple Leaf Forever”. Science says that climate change is the cause for the increase in wild storms that we have been getting. Richard Keeso, who owns a family sawmilling business and has kindly written about it in an article for us, comments on the effects of climate change on his business. Loss and change, the stuff of history.

I’m sad to know that Ken Armson, our Chair for the past four years, is standing down. It was Ken’s vision, and his unflagging support, that gave impetus to the formation of the Society and moved it forward. Over the past five years Ken has built strong ties to the Ontario Historical Society, negotiated agreements for shared memberships with the Ontario Forestry Association and the Ontario Woodlot Owners Association, wrote articles, interacted with the Forest History Society of the United States, heartily and heavily supported the forest inventory display at the Bushplane Museum in Sault Ste. Marie and convinced two school boards to hold essay contests related to local forest history. He held regular meetings, suffered through my innumerable questions about various topics and scanned the journal for errors before it was published. And he did all of this with his usual smile, intelligence and unending cheeriness. We will miss you Ken as our leader and our inspirer. Take care and let’s hope that what you built will continue to grow.

And thank you, Ken, for your kind comments about my work for the Society – they are much appreciated.

And finally – remember everyone – send me an email!

‘Tis the Holiday Season! Sit back and relax and enjoy your family, and let them enjoy you. Take care everyone.

Sherry

Sherry Hambly MScF

A Tribute to Our Chair – Ken Armson

Ken Armson, First President of the FHSO - Thank You!



For me, in this era of “Caller I.D.” there are three types of names that turn up on that little screen that sits at the top of the telephone. One type is “Private Caller” or “Caller Unknown”. Those ones I don’t usually pick up because I think they are salespeople or other annoyances. The second type is people whose name I recognize but don’t dare pick up because... well, I just don’t feel like it.... But for me, when I look at that little screen and see “KARMSON” on it... there seems to be some strange, cosmic force that makes me pick up that phone. And then when that distinctive and animated voice says, “Hello Mike, this is Ken Armson” (pretending that we don’t all have caller i.d.) then, ladies and gentlemen, if you are even part human you are hooked... You will be the proverbial putty in Ken Armson’s fingers...

Not that what Ken Armson will ask you will be that terrible or outrageous... It’s just that what from what many people would sound like “more work”, from Ken sounds like a somewhat magical adventure... An adventure that will add not only something to this world, but will help the forestry cause

and will also be “fun” So it was when I first got that call in 2010, when Ken said he knew I was interested in forest history and that maybe, just maybe, I would be interested in helping form a forest history society for Ontario because after all the U.S. has theirs and so does Quebec, we think etc. etc. And all this from the man whom I had always respected as the last real Provincial Forester for Ontario... The last great soils professor from the Faculty of Forestry, U of T... A man who graduated from the Faculty in (yes) 1951 and who is for all who know him... A (I know he will hate this) Living Legend.

And when he said he wanted to create and work on this new organization with me by his side, it was as if I was a young rookie being chosen to be on the same line by Gordy Howe (come to think of it, there is a resemblance to...). But I digress.

Ken Armson, thank you for having the idea, the energy and the personality to create the Forest History Society of Ontario. Thank you for being so personable, so organized, so thorough and such a pleasure to work with. I hope that without you at the Helm we can continue the good work that you have so wonderfully started. And please do not worry. The next time I see that “KARMSON” on the telephone I will certainly pick it up...

Michael Rosen, RPF

The Ontario Forest Ranger School

By Lisa Harrison and Sherry Hambly

By the late 1880s several huge fires had devastated large portions of Ontario's richly forested lands. To combat the destruction caused by these fires the government enacted its first forest fire legislation in 1878, began using it in 1885 and appointed the first fire rangers to safeguard unlicensed Crown land in 1887.¹ Over time rangers became employed in a wider range of duties beyond firefighting, including scaling, timber work, cruising, etc., with an increasing use of technical equipment.²



Training for ranger staff was limited and was primarily obtained through on-the-job experience. Up to the 1940s North American efforts on forestry education were focused on the university level with little interest in the development of technical type schools, although they were well advanced in other countries. By 1945, there was only one forest ranger school in Canada – L'École Forestière, established in 1923 by the Quebec Government.³ But the realization was growing for the need to have better trained field staff. In 1920 Dr. C.D. Howe, Dean of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Forestry, in his presentation to the Royal Commission on University Finances, noted the need for better educated forestry staff and listed development of a forest ranger school as one of the faculty's four key recommendations to the commission.⁴ The Ontario Forestry Board, created by the province in 1927, also recommended that the government develop a school to train forest rangers in technical aspects of their work.⁵ Peter McEwen, an Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (ODLF) regional forester, expanded on the concept in his 1943 paper titled "Forest Fire Protection in Post-War Rehabilitation". In this paper he recommended establishing a course of training for returning soldiers that would eventually become permanent.⁶ J.C.W. Irwin, co-founder of the Clark-Irwin Publishing Company, and a non-practising forestry graduate who knew a lot about the Department of Lands and Forests, "... presented [to the Select Committee looking into the organization of the department in 1937] a thirteen-point series of recommendations which included ... hiring more graduate foresters and supplementing them with a larger force of less qualified men trained at a ranger school similar to the one later established at Dorset."⁷

The Conservative Government of the 1940s finally acted on the need for a forest technical school and, in conjunction with the University of Toronto (U of T), chose a site on St. Nora Lake. Situated just south of Dorset, about three hours northeast of Toronto, the impressive collection of administrative, dining and dormitory buildings faced Highway 35 to the west and gave students easy access to Crown lands and the U of T or "University" Forest to the east.

In 1944 the Honourable Leslie M. Frost, eventual Ontario premier (1949 to 1961) but then Treasurer and Minister of Mines, spoke with a local newspaper editor about the forest ranger school's imminent development.⁸

"The government believes that the best approach to the conservation and administration of our natural resources is to be found in education," Frost was quoted as saying. Until then ranger training had been handled at various regional headquarters across the province with "not altogether satisfactory" results. Frost predicted the new school would be to forestry what the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph was to agriculture. The 40-acre setting on St. Nora Lake in Haliburton County was chosen for the neighbouring 10,000 acres of land that would provide study conditions "generally applicable" to forests across the province, according to Frost.⁹

The ODLF was to manage the new school and the adjoining forest in conjunction with the U of T Faculty of Forestry. ODLF technical personnel would lend their support to the teaching staff. Faculty of Forestry staff began giving instruction to ODLF ranger personnel

¹ Ministry of Natural Resources 2013. Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services – "Fire History and Facts About Fire", accessed 11/29/13, http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/AFFM/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02_165822.html.

² Richard S. Lambert, *Renewing Nature's Wealth* (Toronto: The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1967) 386.

³ J.W.B. Sisam, "Developing Technical Education Programs, The Ranger School", *Proc. Fifth World Forestry Congress 1960*, 1962, 2: 1210-24.

⁴ C.H. Howe, *Report of Royal Commission on University Finances, Vol. II, Appendices*, (Toronto: Printed by Order of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario by Clarkson W. James, 1921) 46, 47, accessed 12/04/13, <https://ia600608.us.archive.org/19/items/universityfincom02onta/universityfincom02onta.pdf>.

⁵ J.W.B. Sisam, *Forestry Education at Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1961), 80.

⁶ P. MacEwen, "Forest Fire Protection in Post-War Rehabilitation", *The Forestry Chronicle*, 1943 19(1): 24-38.

⁷ Lambert, *Renewing Nature's Wealth*. 347.

⁸ "New Fire Rangers' School Boon to Haliburton County", *Haliburton County News*, November 16, 1944.

⁹ *Haliburton County News*, November 16, 1944.

as early as 1943. However, the school's formal launch was not completed until November 1945 when the province passed the Order-in-Council (OIC) setting out the purpose and responsibility for the school's administration.¹⁰ The purpose of the school, as stated in the OIC, was "to train employees of and for the Department of Lands and Forests, forestry students of the University of Toronto, and employees of forest industry in the Province of Ontario and the Dominion of Canada." Under this Order an Advisory Council was established to provide guidance on management matters such as entrance requirements, fees and courses of study.¹¹

Construction of the school began in 1944 and classes started formally the following year with Peter McEwen as director. Teaching staff were appointed and the curriculum approved. Subjects included fire prevention and detection, firefighting, testing of new firefighting equipment, experimentation with new firefighting methods, timber scaling, forest management and land administration.¹² School construction costs were projected at \$250,000 for 10 buildings that would provide living quarters, meals and classrooms for up to 150 students from autumn through spring. It was expected that those students would include existing rangers, forest industry workers, U of T forestry students, prospective rangers and men returning from World War II who were interested in forestry occupations.¹³



The new school meant Haliburton County "bids fair to become the birthplace of revolutionary techniques in the field of forestry management," Frost prophesied. "This school may well be the forerunner of other such establishments in Ontario." He foresaw that, once the school was operating smoothly in its primary function, teachers from elementary and secondary schools could be trained in forest conservation during the summer so they could pass along the importance and methods of conservation to their students.¹⁴

Under the original agreement, the ODLF would cover capital costs for the school while the U of T provided faculty teaching staff to lecture to government instructors and senior personnel. However, shuttling teaching staff back and forth from Toronto proved too onerous. Eventually the two parties agreed to split the cost of a faculty member to manage both the school and the forest.¹⁵

In his report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1947, the Honourable H.R. Scott, ODLF Minister, reported that department expenditures were at a "comparatively high level".¹⁶ In fact, they were double those at the start of the war eight years earlier, in great part due to costs related to ranger employment and training. According to Scott, the department had "made every effort to improve the quality of service rendered following the outbreak of war". Pre-war, the department spent \$400 to maintain a seasonal fire ranger. By 1947 the cost of maintaining ranger labour quality satisfactory for the ranger school had doubled. Costs for the school that year totaled more than \$320,000 for operations, including staffing (during its tenure the school was a boon for local employment), and for additional construction. A dormitory, dining hall and kitchen and the boiler house and heating plant were already complete, and so focus turned to construction of a workshop, a garage, the director's house, the administration office, the school building and two fire hydrant and hose houses. Receipts attributed directly to the school were listed at \$20,000. It was hoped construction would be completed by the end of 1947.

That same year, the Department of Game and Fisheries was amalgamated with ODLF. Over the next few years the department supplemented its regular activities by holding courses for fish and wildlife specialists and overseers, hosting meetings for U of T, Royal Ontario Museum and school staff, and holding the annual ODLF meeting.¹⁷ "Dorset", as the school was often called, served as a field school for Engineering and Architecture as well as Forestry students. U of T forestry students attended a month-long spring camp at Dorset for many years until the 1970s. It also became an important base from which research was conducted by the Department of Lands and Forests, the U of T and the Canada Department of Agriculture.¹⁸

¹⁰ Mark Kuhlberg, *One Hundred Rings and Counting* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 131 and 145.

¹¹ Sisam, *Report on Ranger Schools*.

¹² *Haliburton County News*, November 16, 1944.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mark Kuhlberg, *One Hundred Rings and Counting*, 145.

¹⁶ *Report of The Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1947 [through to March 31, 1951]* (Toronto: Legislative Assembly of Ontario), accessed 11/29/13, <https://archive.org/details/reportofminister194751ontauoft>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sisam, *Forestry Education at Toronto*, 78, 83.

As part of his plan to reorganize the Department of Lands and Forests, Deputy Minister MacDougall, in 1954, asked J.W.B. Sisam, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto, to review the school and make recommendations for its development. Sisam, in his report, noted the lack of industry involvement with the school.¹⁹ Sisam stated that industry supported the Lakehead Technical Institute for training field forestry personnel – and saw no value in sending their staff to Dorset.^{20 21} This is a refrain that runs throughout Sisam's other writings on the ranger school.²² Sisam also noted that while the Advisory Council met regularly and had made several recommendations to the ODLF, few, if any, of these recommendations had been acted upon. One such recommendation was that Lands and Forests pursue an agreement with the Department of Education to jointly run the school, with Education assuming the cost. Another recommendation was that the school should allow entry of students with no prior forestry experience [high school graduates], a recommendation that was eventually accepted. In a presentation to a legislative committee Sisam made reference to a government report that stated that sawmill productivity was being reduced by poorly trained operators, and he recommended that the school investigate the development of an operator training course. His recommendation was not implemented.²³

In the 1949/1950 fiscal year, Scott reported that 45 students had attended the school and 41 had successfully completed the courses and qualified for the diploma. By the 1950/1951 fiscal year 42 graduates brought the total to 237 technical personnel with OFRS diplomas and the school was said to be "functioning to capacity".²⁴ By 1960, 800 men had graduated from the school.²⁵ By 1965 the school was showing \$122,240 in attributed receipts versus \$215,195 in expenditures.²⁶

As early as 1947 the ODLF had foreseen that Canadian vocational schools would be a means to provide properly trained personnel to make up for the loss of qualified administrative staff experienced during the war years.²⁷ However, vocational schools also began to make inroads into forestry-related training, reducing the need for the OFRS. In the 1960s, community colleges were taking their toll on enrolment and aerial fire detection was rendering ranger patrols and towers less important. The forestry industry had never truly become involved with the school through sending their staff for training, and Fleming College in Peterborough had established its forest technician training program. The OFRS was renamed the Ontario Forest Technical School in 1966 and continued to operate as a forest management training school but with a broader curriculum in natural resources management.²⁸



An overnight program called Junior Forest Rangers (later called Junior Rangers) provided natural resources stewardship training for teens. CBC Television based its first colour show on this popular concept. The fictional Forest Rangers adventure series aired from 1963 to 1965, gaining popularity as far away as Norway and Australia.²⁹

At about that same time, protests over logging in Algonquin Park drew Leslie Frost back to his concept of the school as a public education centre. As Premier, Frost had developed a new parks policy that involved Algonquin Park and he was tapped to chair the Algonquin Park Advisory Committee on the logging controversy. The committee released its findings in 1971. Among them was a recommendation to establish a demonstration centre that could provide public education on essential natural resource management to help the public better understand the practice of logging in the park.^{30 31}

¹⁹ Sisam, *Report on Ranger Schools*.

²⁰ *The Forestry Chronicle*, 1948, 24(2): 152, 10. News and Notes, New Vocational Instruction at Lakehead Technical Institute: The institute was created by OIC in 1946 to provide technical training opportunities in the northern part of the province. Its focus was forestry and mining. Entry requirements were grade 12; course length was two years.

²¹ Sisam, *Report on Ranger Schools*: Sisam's 1954 report contains two addenda – one from the forest industry representative on the Advisory Council and one from the Ontario Forest Industries Association. Both suggest that course changes are needed for industry to become interested in sending staff to OFRS for training.

²² Sisam, in an unpublished report in 1954 to the Legislative Committee for Lands and Forests noted that even though the OFRS was the best equipped forest technical school in North America, forest industry was not interested in sending their staff to the school for training. This disinterest by industry in sending staff to the school was noted in his presentation to the World Forestry Congress in 1960 and in his book "Forest Education at University of Toronto" (Grey Literature, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Peterborough, Ontario).

²³ Sisam, *Report on Ranger Schools*.

²⁴ *Report of The Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1947 [through to March 31, 1951]*.

²⁵ Sisam, "Developing Technical Education Programs."

²⁶ "Annual Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1965 [through to March 31, 1966]," (Ontario Department of Lands and Forests), accessed 11/29/13, <https://archive.org/details/reportofminister196566ontauoft>.

²⁷ *Report of The Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1947 [through to March 31, 1951]*.

²⁸ *Annual Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1965 [to March 31, 1966]*.

²⁹ "The Forest Rangers 1963-1965," CBC Television, accessed 12/2/13, <http://www.cbc.ca/75/2011/08/cbcs-first-colour-tv-show.html>.

³⁰ George Hamilton, first Director of the Leslie M. Frost Centre for Natural Resources, retired, Personal Communication, 2013.

Once again, Frost proved to be a visionary. In 1974, the year following Frost's death, the government re-opened the former Ontario Forest Ranger School as the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre.



Meanwhile, the ODLF became the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). The OMNR staffed the centre with education specialists who developed school curricula in resource management and created professional development programs for teachers. They also trained OMNR staff, helped support the Ontario Rangers (formerly Junior Rangers) youth program, and developed weekend programs for special interest groups such as birdwatchers. Staff numbers ranged from 35 to 50 year to year, not including summer students. The school also had its own forest/resource management staff responsible for managing the forest lands attached to it (the U of T had abandoned its timber licence on the area some years before; at its peak the University Forest totalled close to 17,000 acres³²). Classes were held in the OFRS administrative building and demonstrations took place in the surrounding forest area.^{33 34}

Initially the Centre focused on pure sciences such as forestry, biology and fisheries management, but eventually the focus became a blend of sciences with students encouraged to make discoveries for themselves and draw their own conclusions.³⁵

In 1992 OMNR shifted forest/resource management responsibilities to the OMNR office in Minden, effectively marking the centre's decline. Over the next decade the OMNR refocused its efforts in resource management from doing to planning and overseeing.^{36 37} A refocused agenda and rising costs forced the OMNR to re-evaluate its commitment to the site. In 2004, 30 years after the Frost Centre opened, the OMNR closed it. According to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), employees received notice July 6 that the Centre would close July 14, a move that would save the Ministry \$1.2 million annually.³⁸

Staff, area residents and Centre visitors protested loudly at the Minden OMNR office and at the provincial seat at Queen's Park in Toronto.³⁹ OPSEU began a Save the Frost campaign on behalf of its 31 members in the group of 35 affected staff.⁴⁰ Residents had already created the Friends of the Frost Centre to combat the closure.⁴¹ An Operation Perma Frost website was established.⁴² Among the many user groups protesting the closure was the American Fisheries Society, which had used the Centre for its annual general meeting since the inception of the Ontario chapter.⁴³

The province reconsidered, instead issuing a request for proposals for the property. The Friends mounted a proposal but were outbid by a Toronto businessman and local cottager. The successful bidder launched the Frost Centre Institute as an environmental arts and education summer camp in 2007, but the institute was unable to achieve self-sufficiency before funds ran out and it closed in 2010, reverting to the province's realty management arm, the Ontario Realty Corporation, now Infrastructure Ontario (IO).^{44 45 46}

³¹ "Presentation to members of the Ontario government and to the Minister of Natural Resources, for his consideration in the renewal of Algonquin Provincial Park Cottage Leaseholds, October, 2006," Algonquin Park Residents Association, accessed 11/29/13, http://www.algonquinparkresidents.ca/assets/documents/APRA_Brief.pdf.

³² Mark Kuhlberg, *One Hundred Rings and Counting*. 131.

³³ Barrie Martin, Personal Communication, 2013.

³⁴ George Hamilton, Personal Communication, 2013.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Barrie Martin, Personal Communication, 2013.

³⁷ George Hamilton, Personal Communication, 2013.

³⁸ Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), "Save the Frost Campaign", *OPSEU Online 2004*, accessed 12/4/13, <http://www.opseu.org/campaign/frost/whatis.htm>.

³⁹ Operation Perma Frost, 2004, accessed 12/4/13, <http://environmenthaliburton.ca/test/id91.htm>.

⁴⁰ OPSEU, "Save the Frost Campaign".

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⁴² Operation Perma Frost 2004.

⁴³ American Fisheries Society, Ontario Chapter, 2004, accessed 12/4/13, <http://www.afs-oc.org/frost.htm>.

⁴⁴ Barrie Martin, Personal Communication, 2013.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Infrastructure 2007. Government Approves Frost Centre Lease, accessed 12/2/13, <http://news.ontario.ca/archive/en/2007/03/12/Government-Approves-Frost-Centre-Lease.html>.

This year (2013) IO announced the province will split the property, selling a 19-acre section along Highway 35 containing the buildings and transferring the eastern 21 acres to the OMNR.⁴⁷

Though most of the buildings on the property have been empty for years, the old summer kitchen and the towerman's cabin remain in use. The Township of Algonquin Highlands leases office space in the former kitchen for its water trails and hiking, Nordic ski and snowshoe trails programs. The township also preserves the former towerman's cabin as a heritage structure and opens it to winter trail users as a heated shelter and equipment access point.^{48 49}

The OMNR renewed the township's land use permit until March 2014, but ended funding for the programs. The ministry also discontinued the last program connected to the old school's past: the Ontario Rangers and Stewardship Rangers youth programs merged into the Stewardship Youth Rangers, now a day program.^{50 51} However, the township was successful in bidding to host the new program's local segment, resulting in continued student support for maintenance of more than 64 kilometres of hiking and ski trails as well as other resource work.



The township benefitted from continued use of the buildings and land; according to staff, the trail programs give visitors access to 60,000 acres of Crown land, are among the few provincial trail programs to approach the break-even point, and draw visitors from around the world to contribute to the local economy.⁵²

Frost's vision of a viable natural resources education centre continues to this day. Those who know the property say building renovations would require considerable investment and the centre must operate year-round to be sustainable. Regardless, the township's municipal cultural plan, created just this year, shows that many residents still think of the Frost Centre as a valuable heritage resource and they would like to see the old school resurrected yet again.^{53 54}

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Forest Ranger School Reflections

By James Baker and Wilson Samis

Introduction

In his yearbook “message” to the 1967 Class of the Ontario Forest Technical School (later The Leslie M. Frost Centre), Quimby Hess, who was the Director from 1960 to 1967, remarked, “1967 will mark the most memorable year from my point of view. I am led to say this because 1967 marked the completion of a series of endeavours over the years to achieve for the Ontario Forest Technical School the highest possible status from the standpoint of training philosophy, instructional techniques and facilities, physical plant and environment for staff and students and last but not least the selection and molding of the student body”.¹ Up until 1967 the Ontario Forest Technical School (OFTS) was known as the Ontario Forest Ranger School. The name change in 1967 recognized that the school curriculum was broader than just teaching forest ranger skills and was probably also changed to be compatible with technical programs being established at community colleges at that time. In fact, the 1967 class was the second last class at the school. The first forestry technician class outside of OFTS was started at Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay in 1968 based on the OFTS model, and all forest technician courses now continue to be taught at selected community colleges in Ontario.



Main classroom building.

After 1968, the school continued to be used for continuing education of Department of Lands and Forests staff and, subsequently, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) staff. The ranger school site became the Frost Centre in 1974 to provide continuing education courses for MNR staff, as well as a centre for outdoor education for primary and secondary schools in southern Ontario. The Frost Centre was closed in 2004 amid shrinking MNR budgets and much controversy.²

Some History

Beginning in 1945 and until 1967, the Ontario Forest Ranger School was the primary training facility for forest rangers working for the Department of Lands and Forests and the forest industry. Although the school was built and opened for classes in 1945, its first classes were held at Sherwood Forest Camp in Haliburton in 1943-44.³ Only two other similar schools existed in Canada, one in New Brunswick and one in Alberta. The origins of the school date back to 1921 with the establishment of a Chief Ranger Station on the western shore of Lake St. Nora. In 1940 the University of Toronto's Faculty of Forestry was given 5,000 acres across the road from the ranger station to be used for field training and research. This initial acreage was increased by another 6,000 acres by the Department of Lands and Forests.

With the increasing demand on forest resources after the second world war the Department recognized it was necessary to update knowledge and skills of staff responsible for forest management, forest protection, and fish and wildlife management. At the same time there was an unemployed pool of demobilized soldiers who could be employed as forestry workers. These intersecting needs and opportunities resulted in a recommendation by Peter McEwan in a report entitled “Forest Fires Protection in a Post-War Rehabilitation”⁴ to the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers that a permanent training facility be established. Moreover until this time the U of T forestry students required better accommodations for their field courses at the university forest so more permanent facilities were greatly desired by both faculty and students. An agreement was signed between the university and the government in June of 1944 and the site chosen was at the ranger station first established in 1921. Peter McEwan participated in the original reconnaissance flight in 1921 that recommended the ranger station be built on the west side of Lake St. Nora so it was no surprise that he recommended the same location for the ranger school, and it was immediately adjacent to the university forest. In the agreement the government was responsible for building the facility, hiring staff



Source: Google Maps.

¹ W. Samis, ed., *Ontario Forest Technical School Yearbook* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1967).

² “History of the Frost Centre” on *Frost Centre Closure, Operation Permafrost*, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://environmenthaliburton.ca/test/id91.htm>.

³ Richard S. Lambert, *Renewing Nature's Wealth* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1967).

⁴ P. McEwan, “Forest Fire Protection in Post-War Rehabilitation”, *Forestry Chronicle* 19 (1) (1943): 24-38.

and selecting students. The university would use the school for undergraduate and graduate courses, equip the facilities and provide demonstration sites.”⁵

Dormitories, workshops, kitchen and dining hall, staff houses, a boathouse and sawmill were established between 1945 and 1966. On- site residential capacity for students was 150 after the completion of Dorm 90 in 1966.

Selection of Students

The original list of qualifications of forest rangers stated “they must be “active, energetic men of cool temper and good judgement”.”⁶

“Applicants had to be 18 years of age in January of the year being applied for, have Ontario Grade 12 standing or equivalent. However, mature persons, who have demonstrable academic ability and significant work experience, may apply and request special consideration”. Each applicant had to write a “Learning Capacity Test” as well as have a medical examination. Other considerations included “woods and related employment experience, recommendations from employers, fluency in another language, particularly French, and the maturity of thought and motivation for applying.”⁷



As stated in the prospectus for 1966/67, “The objective of the School is to provide technical and other practical training to men who will be employed in technical and foremen capacities in the management and utilization of the renewable natural resources. Those who successfully complete the general diploma course are qualified for employment in positions between those at the semi-skilled level and the professional forester or biologist.”⁸ The course was divided into three terms with the first running from January 3rd to March 18th, the second from April 18th to July 1st, and the third from October 3rd to December 16th.

Learning and Life at OFTS

Those of us who were successfully admitted to the course arrived at the school on January 2nd to begin the first term on January 3rd. Although some of our memories of those first few days have been lost in the heavy fog of 46 years one of the statements made to us on that first day was that one third of us would not pass the first term. It began to dawn on us throughout the first term and came to full realization by the end of the term that the objective of “technical and other practical training” also meant being able to live, learn, and otherwise happily function in a semi isolated forest environment of deep snow, surrounded by mixed hardwood forests, frozen lakes, and limited outside entertainment. Whether by design or not and we assume the former, we were exposed and tested to determine if we could happily function in these conditions that in many respects were a surrogate for living conditions after graduation; an unstated curriculum objective. Many of those who did not make it through first term could not handle the culture and environment. Indeed, one third of the class failed the first term or withdrew voluntarily.



1967 yearbook.

Unlike going to college and/or university, we attended classes and/or field projects 8 hours/day including coffee breaks, lunch and travel time for field exercises and so on. There were no spares. The courses were not intellectually demanding but it was the ability to learn new skills, to function as a member of a team, and to adjust to the forest-centric culture that separated those that passed. A number of field and classroom projects were completed by four-man crews whose members were assigned alphabetically. Everyone was assigned to a room alphabetically with two people per room. So, right off the bat, one had to learn to live with a complete stranger and learn to work and contribute with members of the crew who met only a few short days ago.

The 1967 student body consisted of men from across Canada although most were from small town Ontario. In the 1966 class two women attended for the first time but in 1967 it was again an all- male bastion. Many of us were from farms or farming communities; and a few were from urban areas of Toronto, Hamilton, London, etc.⁹ Over the years between 1959 and 1966, 22 international students from places such as Venezuela, Trinidad, Dominica, Jamaica, Kenya and the United States attended the School.¹⁰ Ages and experience of students were mixed with some being full time employees of Lands and Forests sent to the school to upgrade knowledge and skills, some who had a number of years of work experience in other types of jobs, and some directly out of high school.

⁵ History of the Frost Centre.

⁶ Lambert, *Renewing Nature's Wealth*, 386.

⁷ Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, *Ontario Forest Ranger School 1966-67 Prospectus* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1966).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Samis, *Ontario Forest Technical School Yearbook*.

¹⁰ Lambert, *Renewing Nature's Wealth*, 550.

A number of married or near-married students traveled home on weekends to visit girlfriends or fix the kids bikes etc. but for those who stayed at school, entertainment consisted of activities such as ice fishing, snowshoeing, cards, indoor sports, hockey, and for those with transportation, a night in Huntsville. We also did a lot of fishing in the spring term and hunting in the fall term. The latter included deer hunting before classes started during the opening week of deer season.

The structure of the course over the year ensured that students experienced all four seasons for conducting fieldwork; from extreme cold and deep snow conditions in the winter, the melting snows of March, to the height of black fly season in June and the pleasant crisp fall days of October and the first snows of November.



Curriculum

The core curriculum for the ranger school was established early on and changed only to accommodate new technology and new knowledge.¹¹ The curriculum for first term of 1967 consisted of: Basic Education, Communications, Letter Writing and Report Writing, Mathematics, Introduction to Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Protection, Forest Mensuration (Tree measurement, Aerial Photography, Cruising), Dendrology, Surveying, Drafting, Foremanship.¹²

The second term included Report Writing, Canoe and Outboard Motor Instruction and Water Safety, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Protection (Fire, Insects and Disease), Forest Mensuration (Regeneration Survey, Photogrammetry, Cruising), Dendrology, Silviculture (Regeneration and Culture of Forests, Forest History), Parks and Recreation, Surveying, Camp Clerking, Foremanship.¹³

Third term consisted of classes and field work in Forest Protection, Forest Mensuration (Cruising, Volume Table Construction), Fish and Wildlife Management, Forest Management, Forest Utilization (Logging Operations, Forest Products, Milling), Silviculture (Silvics, Nurseries, Tree Planting, Tree Marking, Tree Growth), Soils, Surveying, Road Location and Construction, Foremanship (Supervision, Safety), First Aid.¹⁴

The curriculum consisted of a total of 966 hours of course work and exams over the three terms. Students could also take the scaling course that was conducted over 3 weeks between 1st and 2nd terms. First term was 330 hours; second and third terms were 318 hours each. The total of 966 hours compares to about 1,400 hours for the current forest technician program at Fleming College over four semesters and two years.¹⁵

The bulk of the 966 hours was devoted to forest related subjects (709 hours), Surveying, Road Location and Construction (165 hours) had the next highest number of hours followed by Fish and Wildlife and Forest Protection with 121 hours each.

In some respects this broad and integrated curriculum based on a forested ecosystem preceded the concept of integrated resource management of the 1980's and ecosystem management paradigms of the 1990's adopted by the various resource agencies in North America and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The adoption of these concepts by the first author (Baker) while developing policy for the MNR was aided by this foundation at the ranger school.

Costs

In 1967, the total cost for the three terms was \$748.00, which would be \$5,035.00 in 2013 dollars. This cost included tuition @\$50/term and room and board @\$192.50/term.¹⁶ In comparison, in 2013/14 tuition for the 2-year Forest Technician program at Fleming costs \$1,816.75/ semester for a total of \$7, 267.00. After adding in residence and meal plan costs the total for the two year program is about \$14,338.00.¹⁷ No doubt, much of the true costs of the program in 1967 were subsidized by the government and we obviously benefited both in lower costs and requiring only one year of attending school to obtain the same qualifications that now require 2 years.

¹¹ *History of the Frost Centre.*

¹² Ontario Department of Lands and Forests.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Fleming College, accessed October 3, 2013, <http://flemingcollege.ca/programs/forestry-technician>.

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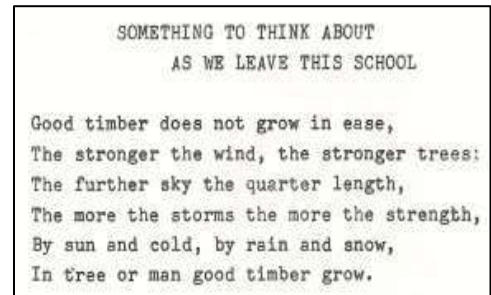
¹⁷ Fleming College.

Faculty

Quimby Hess was the director of the Ranger School from 1960 to 1967 but was replaced by Rod Hummel at the beginning of the fall term in 1967. Members of the faculty included Jack Dickenson, Bruce Collins, Earl Goodman, who we affectionately called "Hornbeam" (because it is the other common name for Ironwood and Earl was always trying to trick us into misidentifying it in our dendrology class), Don Lillow, George MacAdam, George Pennock, Doug Ryan, Bill Small, John Simpson, and Gordon Wilson, Manager of the University Forest. The instructors had considerable practical experience. Some were previous graduates of the ranger school and many had military experience, which was reflected in the rigor and discipline that they insisted we bring to our work. The concept of "thinking before acting" was a particular refrain of George Pennock whom we all respected but also feared because of our oft-repeated predilection to do the opposite.

Resource Management Contributions of OFTS Graduates

In 1967 we were on the leading edge of the boomer generation and obviously benefited from an expanding post war economy and the optimism across the country during the celebration of Canada's first 100 years. All of us had numerous employment opportunities. The three-month break between second and third terms (July, August, September) provided opportunities for summer employment to gain experience and personally assess what one might want to do after graduation. Most graduates went to work for the Department of Lands and Forests as forest techs, lands techs, conservation officers, park managers, research assistants in fisheries, wildlife, and forestry, and the fire program. At the time the Federal Government was hiring forest insect and disease rangers and seven of us went to work in the 'bug lab' in Sault Ste. Marie. Some graduates went to work for forestry companies in Ontario and Quebec and some returned to their home province of Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec to work for their respective provincial governments.



"Good Timber" by Douglas Malloch.

Within Ontario some graduates of the ranger school moved through the ranks of the Department of Lands and Forests to become, program supervisors within Districts, District Managers, senior policy advisors, senior managers/executives of the Department and the MNR. Others held senior management positions within other government Ministries and with the Federal Government.

Although the ranger school was clear in its prospectus that it was "not a University preparatory school" some graduates went on to obtain professional and graduate degrees in forestry or biology perhaps inspired by what they learned and the experience of attending such a unique institution.

Graduates of the 23 years of Ranger School made major contributions to resource management in Ontario and elsewhere.

The personal lives of the 2000 or so graduates of this singular academy were immeasurably enriched by the interpersonal and broad ranging practical skills that were introduced and mastered there.

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Log Marks

By John Haegeman

The marking of logs goes back to colonial times when England put a ban on the cutting of large oaks and pines in 1691. Any tree with a diameter of 24 inches or more was reserved for the royal navy. Upon these trees was cut the "Broad Arrow" and to cut one down would be met with a penalty as harsh as for murder. In 1706, Queen Anne commissioned her surveyor general, at a cost of 200 pounds per year, to enforce the law protecting all such trees if they were deemed to be fit and proper. The colonists paid little attention to the law and many trees marked with the "Broad Arrow" ended up in their mills. In Michigan and Ontario, the first marks were bark marks made with an axe and placed on the light side of the log: the side that would float uppermost. With miles of logs to sort, there was no time to turn a log to identify it. With millions of logs to sort, a quicker way of sorting was needed. Bark marks were limited to a series of straight lines, and the chances of duplication were great, adding confusion to the process. In 1842, Michigan passed a law requiring log marks to be registered in the county where the logs were to be manufactured¹.



Source: Michigan Log Marks.

In Canada, an act respecting the marking of timber was passed in 1870². It decreed that all floated wood in Quebec and Ontario be marked and that all marks be adopted and registered within one month of having commenced operations. Neglect to do so was subject to a fine of \$50.00. The cost to register a mark in Eastern Canada was \$2.00, and this would cover one mark or 100. To transfer a mark to another company cost 50 cents. On the application, the company stated that, to their knowledge, the mark they selected was not in use by another company. By 1874, there were 433 marks registered. In 1874, J. Barnwall Jackson published a

book called "The Lumberman's Timber Mark Guide"³. Mr. Jackson was employed by the Canadian Department of Agriculture, and compiled every mark from the official records from mark #1 - May 30, 1870 to mark #433 - Feb. 26, 1874. The book was made available to lumber merchants and to people in the timber trade. The cost of the book was a phenomenal \$10.00, but it could save a company thousands of dollars in the event they duplicated someone else's mark.

Paint marks were also used to mark logs. Paint was applied to the end of logs in a series of patterns that could be circles, squares, triangles, etc. Hundreds of these paint marks were registered and many were used along the North Shore.

Along the North Shore and Georgian Bay, the main river systems were the French, The Whitefish, The Spanish, The Serpent and The Mississaggi. Many of the smaller streams were also used. At the mouth of these river systems were the "sorting jacks". These were floating sidewalks where hundreds of men with pike poles directed the owners' logs into his particular pocket. There were representatives here from all the companies. When a pocket contained enough logs, they were formed into a boom and floated to that company's mill. To the mills located along the North Shore, booms might contain only 20,000 logs. If the mill was further away, then the booms might contain 50,000 logs. The largest boom of logs ever recorded contained 91,700 logs and was towed from the mouth of the French



Sorting jack, Muskegon, Michigan
(Source: Michigan Log Marks).

¹ Clifford Allen, ed., *Michigan Log Marks* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State College, 1941).

² *Timber Marks Act, SC, Cap. XXXVI, 1870.*

³ J. Barnwall Jackson, *The Lumberman's Timber Mark Guide* (Montreal, G.E. Desbarats, 1874).

River to East Tawas, Michigan in 1891. During the 1880s and 1890s millions of logs were boomed to mills in Michigan. This practice all came to an end in 1898 when the export of logs was forbidden, but that is another story. The sorting jacks required a huge number of men. At the mouth of the Spanish, 200 men sorted 32,000 logs daily. The sorting jack at Muskegon, Michigan employed 850 men. Michigan had about 20,000 log marks. Wisconsin and Minnesota had almost the same number, so one can see the monumental task of sorting these logs. On the Tittabawassee River, (a tributary of the Saginaw), 1,100 marks were used in the year of 1875. At the mouth of the Spanish River there would be about 20 to 25 different pockets for the companies using the river. Mills were located in Blind River, Spragge, Cutler, John Island, Aird Island, Little Current, Byng Inlet, French River, Collins Inlet, Midland, Penetanguishene, Victoria Harbour, Sarnia, Owen Sound and several more centres. From the mouth of the Spanish to Sarnia took about 14 days of towing with good weather.



Log hammers were usually from four to six pounds in weight and were cast in foundries. Some of the earlier ones were made by the camp blacksmith. Some companies had only one mark, while others had a dozen of more. Hammers could be just about any shape: they were round, square, rectangular, triangular or diamond-shaped. The most interesting hammers were the ones in the shape of symbols. Some of my hammers are in the shape of bells, a man's hand, a man's foot, a head, a horse's head, a saw blade, a horseshoe, a yoke for oxen, a bridle bit etc. Logs were stamped several times on both ends in case one end got damaged in rapids or rocks on the drive. Some companies used their name for their mark: "HALL" for Ed. Hall, "HILL" for Arthur Hill. Some companies used initials like "SL" for

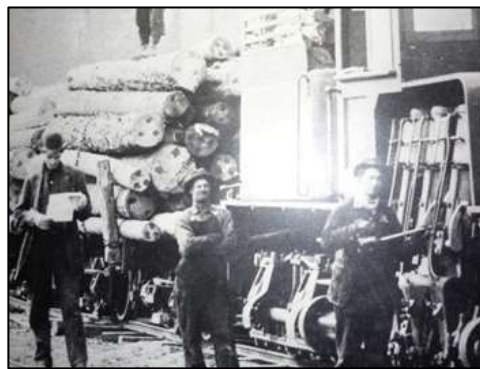
Saginaw Lumber, "V.H." for Victoria Harbour. Some companies used the mark of the township they logged, e.g., 1A, 1B, and 82 were used by the McFadden Co. Not all hammers were made of cast iron or cast steel; some were made of brass.

One would think that with all the thousands of hammers used in the north woods, there would still be many available. But this is not the case. They are extremely hard to come by as they are mostly in the hands of private collectors and in museums. During the scrap metal drives during World War II, much of the steel in the old camps was used for the war effort. No doubt, many hammers, axes, horseshoes and sleigh runners got melted down.

The mechanical age has taken over from the days of the horse and sleigh. Hammers are still used in the Pacific Northwest, but they are not as desirable to collect as the ones from Ontario and the Great Lake States. No doubt there are many still buried in the deep woods where they will probably stay safely tucked away forever.



Bark mark.



Paint marks on log ends.



Log end mark – FOX.

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The Great Flood 1883

By John Hazlitt and Ted Turner

This article was originally published as a section in the book "The Power of the Maitland" by John Hazlitt and Ted Turner (Auburn, Ontario: Rhea Hamilton Seeger, Possibilities Publishing, 2011) and is reprinted here (with minor changes) with permission.

There is a certain amount of flooding in the watershed during the spring melt and sometimes during severe rainstorms. Flooding occurs when water enters the natural stream channel at a greater rate than the channel can pass. The water levels rise and the land along the channel is inundated. Nature built its own flood plains along streams, but man has insisted on building on this land, which truly belongs to the stream. As a result, floods have created massive property damage and often cause loss of human life.

During the day of August 19th, 1883, an intense storm front approached the counties of Huron, Perth and Waterloo. Records indicate that some fifteen centimetres (six inches) of rain fell in 24 hours over the Maitland River watershed. The river rose at a very fast rate, washing away crops, bridges, both road and rail, along with causing extensive damage to some village/town sites. One young man died. Dams that provided waterpower to the many mills were destroyed. Thousands of logs that lay floating in sawmill head ponds waiting for the expertise of the sawyer were lost.



"The devastation from the flood of 1883 is remarkable," said Steve Jackson, Water Resources Engineer with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. "Based on damage reports, it is interesting to compare how the watershed reacted in 1883 versus how the watershed reacts today. Although, MVCA has not recently experienced such a widespread storm, in the last decade there have been localized events with similar precipitation amounts. The watershed is clearly more reactive than in the 1800s; a similar storm today has the potential to have catastrophic consequences. The flood of 1883 is an excellent reminder of the power of Mother Nature.

"In 1883 the headlines of the papers throughout the area tell a chilling tale of destruction and even loss of life. It is not hard to imagine that the flood changed the economic and industrial climate of the whole Maitland watershed. Many of the dams were not replaced and the industry they supported either moved, closed up or used another source of power.

HURON EXPOSITOR August 24, 1883

"The Storm of the Season"

"The most severe rain and thunder storm that has visited this section for a long time occurred on Saturday night last."

Auburn "We had a very heavy rain and thunder storm accompanied by hail on Saturday night last" "On Sunday last from two o'clock until ten the Maitland River rose about four feet, and was considerably higher than during the spring freshets."

Ethyl "The boom at Mr. Milne's dam gave way letting loose, five or six hundred logs which went rushing down and were totally lost."

Wingham "Both Wingham dams were swept away on Sunday evening about 10 o'clock." "Boating is now the fashionable means of locomotion, but the water is falling rapidly."

Bluevale THE FLOOD "The heavy rain of Saturday night had full effect on the Maitland, which rose to an alarming height on Sunday evening. Leech's dam which is part woodwork and part earth was in danger of going and a large number turned out to work at it. About 10 p.m. the boom which held the flood wood gave way and the debris instantly blocked the gates. The water burst over the earth dam and carried all before it."

LISTOWEL STANDARD August 24, 1883

"The Greatest Flood Ever Known in This Section "Buildings, Bridges, and Sidewalks carried away."

"Streets turned into rivers."

"Several buildings were carried away and smashed to atoms."

"Sunday last was a day that will be long remembered by the residents of Listowel, the Town having been visited by the greatest flood ever known here."

"Messrs. C.E. Lee and S. Smith, photographers, each secured views of the flood from a number of different points."



Wingham "The wildest thunderstorm of the season set in here early Saturday morning and great quantities of rain have fallen. Johnston & Hamilton's mill dam was washed out. The Maitland River has risen twelve feet since Saturday morning, and if it continues rising today the main street will be flooded. Fisher and Hutton's Mill dam has been carried away."

Brussels "The first damage done here was the taking away of Vanstone's temporary dam and what was done to their new dam."

Bluevale "Leech dam in Bluevale has been swept away. Mr. Leech losing \$4000.00 worth of logs."

Grey Township "McAllister dam was destroyed."

Ethyl "Wm. Milne's boom broke early Sunday morning losing about a quarter million feet of lumber."

Harriston "The lightning struck a telegraph pole near the T. G. & B railway bridge, shattering it badly and ran from there to the telegraph office" "Tom was working the keys and for a moment thought he was a goner."

All of the Listowel flood photographs are courtesy of Stratford-Perth Archives.

Huronian: From Blow Sands to Phosphorus Overloading

By John Bacher

Watersheds of the area known as Huronia that flow into Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe contain two quite different indicators of environmental stress, which have become associated with the need for increased forest cover. The desertification of the moraines of Simcoe County led to a phenomenon known as “blow sand”, which peaked around 1921. Blow sand areas were mitigated through programs of afforestation. Today, the waters of Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay are now experiencing increased phosphorous loadings related to the lack of riparian cover in the streams flowing into them.

These current problems are reminders of past lessons on the need to have adequate forest cover in predominately-agricultural areas. Afforestation in southern Ontario was dramatically reduced in the 1990s as government assisted tree-planting programs collapsed from the previous norms of twenty million to a low point of two million by the end of the decade. Recent efforts to improve the situation have resulted in afforestation levels of three million trees annually, with a planned annual total of 10 million trees.¹

Today’s Simcoe County and the watershed of Lake Simcoe was one of the most densely populated areas at the time of European contact in the 17th century, in what is now Ontario. There are no indications of human activities causing problems of either desertification or water pollution. Accounts by the European explorers Samuel de Champlain and Father Sagard described the area, which they defined as Huronia, as having approximately 30,000 people dependent upon agriculture. While creating land for agriculture made old growth forests quite rare, this activity did not generate a landscape of sand barrens. This occurred later, with a much-reduced level of human population intensity, as a result of forest clearance for agriculture by the 1880s. The area that was most dramatically impacted was a landform that is known as the Oro Interlobate Moraine, created 12,000 years ago as a glacier terminus. After the topsoil here was washed away following forest removal, all that remained was infertile sand and gravel incapable of growing vegetation.^{2 3}

The Oro Moraine is a prominent landform extending from Highway 400 to Orillia, and occupies about 45 square miles (116 km²). Once forest cover was stripped away, the sandy soils of the Oro Moraine became quite vulnerable to erosion. Mack Williams, who grew up on a farm in this landscape, was encouraged by it to become a forester with the Ministry of Natural Resources and a leading advocate of afforestation. He once recalled, “When the wind blew, the sands blew” and the butter on his family’s table became covered with dust if windows were left open.^{4 5 6}



Midhurst Forestry Station.

¹ Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, “Wanted, One Billion Trees”, in Redefining Conservation, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario Annual Report, 2009/10 (Toronto: Environmental Commissioner of Ontario), 37-41.

² Ken Armson, *Ontario Forests: A Historical Perspective* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2001), 17, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108.

³ Nick Eyles, *Ontario Rocks: Three Billion Years of Environmental Change* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2002), 194, 195, 212, 213, 267.

⁴ “Oro Moraine”, Wikipedia, accessed Nov. 28, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oro_Moraine.

⁵ “Oro Moraine 2010 Report Card”, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, accessed Nov. 28, 2013, http://www.nvca.on.ca/ws_par/groups/public/@pub/@nvca/documents/web_content/wspar_027350.pdf

⁶ Mark Bisset, “From Dust to Towering Trees”, *Barrie Examiner*, March 27, 2010: Mack Williams reforested a hundred acres on the Oro Moraine while a forestry student and subsequently drew income from thinnings. Shortly before his death after 60 years of forest stewardship, Williams donated an easement to the forest to the Couchiching Conservancy.

Simcoe County was blessed by an inter-generational effort of a father and son, Charles and E.C. Drury, to reverse the problem of the spreading deserts of the Oro Moraine. This shared activism continued for over a century, beginning when Charles Drury joined the Ontario Fruit Growers Association (OFGA) to E.C.'s death in 1968. Charles Drury grew apples and pears on his Crown Hill farm north of Barrie, which led him to become involved in the OFGA. Here he met some of the leading conservationists in Ontario, notably the Mohawk Chief, George Johnson (father of Pauline Johnson) and Robert William Phipps. He carried out afforestation on his Crown Hill farm using Johnson's methods with black walnuts. Charles Drury, who became a member of the Ontario Legislature and Minister of Agriculture, encouraged his son, E.C. to attend the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC). Here he made contact with a group of dedicated conservationist friends, including Nelson Monteith, who became eventually, Minister of Agriculture. They persuaded the current Minister of Agriculture, John Dryden, to create the Ontario tree nursery at OAC.⁷

The OAC nursery was started by a Lecturer in Forestry, Edmund Zavitz. One of his early tasks was to journey to E.C. Drury's Crown Hill farm, which Drury had recently inherited from his father, Charles. In October of 1905, Edmund Zavitz cycled from OAC to meet with Drury and stayed for approximately a week. They toured all the blow sand waste areas of the Oro Moraine in a horse and buggy. Zavitz defined this area as Orr Lake and the Angus and Midhurst Plains. At Midhurst, in an area that was covered with pine stumps and blow sands, Zavitz and Drury selected the site for the Midhurst Reforestation Station. They selected this site because of the excellent ground water conditions of the moraines on which it is located. This feature later resulted in the demonstration forest they created around the station to be named, "Springwater" Provincial Park. The strong flow of springwater would provide the irrigation water that was needed for a tree nursery.⁸

Zavitz and Drury knew what to do in Simcoe County when they had power to effect reforms in 1919 when Drury became the Premier of Ontario. As they planned in 1905, the Midhurst Nursery was created and an Ontario Tree Seed Plant at Angus established, which was similarly surrounded by a demonstration forest. Drury persuaded Simcoe County to become the first partner with the provincial government in its Agreement Forest program. On May 8, 1922, Drury was able to take part in the first tree planting in what became the Hendrie Forest.⁹ Under the leadership of its early superintendents, Isaac Marritt and Meth Anderson, the Midhurst nursery became a spectacular demonstration of what afforestation can achieve. Hauling loads of muck to improve the content of the soil made it possible to develop a pattern of pools and waterways. This process removed stones, which were used to create a World War One memorial and decorative features such as a picnic pavilion. Ponds were stocked with trout. Fingerlings from here were later used to re-stock lakes that had been depleted of fish. Trout became a visitor attraction when the ice broke in the spring. Ducks, geese, swans and beaver became attractions along with picnic tables and playing fields.¹⁰



Memorial cairn at Hendrie Forest commemorates the start of the Agreement Forest program in Ontario, marked by the first tree planting there in 1921.

The spectacular beauty of the future Springwater Provincial Park became an important feature of the success of the great events organized by the Ontario Conservation and Reforestation Association (OCRA). It was launched between August 11 and August 17, 1937, during a week of events in Simcoe County. The field days, through hikes, banquets and ceremonies, celebrated the wonders of afforestation. These OCRA field days became annual events until Edmund Zavitz's retirement in 1954. They were important in mobilizing public opinion behind two reforms that Drury and Zavitz believed were crucial to increasing forest cover in southern Ontario. These two reforms were the passage of the Conservation Authorities Act and the Trees Act (which for the first time, provide a legal framework for allowing restrictions on tree cutting on private lands). Both acts were passed in 1946. Another feature of the 1937 OCRA Field Day was the building of a memorial cairn at the Hendrie Forest. At its first OCRA banquet held in Barrie, Drury was the keynote speaker. He stressed how deforestation had caused rivers to "become serious menaces, at one time being the source of destructive floods, at another time having so little water that they become polluted and stagnant."¹¹

The Simcoe County Forest system, begun in 1922 with the first planting at Hendrie and a few years later at Orr Lake, lived up to the expectations of its founders. This success however, required considerable patience. The blow sands on the Oro Moraine had to be planted with tightly packed coniferous seedlings in order to prevent wind erosion. Zavitz planned that these trees would be thinned, helping to both pay for the effort and contribute to the spacing needed for the transition to a mixed wood forest. This goal was eventually achieved, but the first thinnings at Orr Lake and Hendrie County Forests could not take place until 1948 because of the fragility of the soils. The Simcoe County Agreement Forest system at the time the province ceased being a partner in 1995 had

⁷ E.C. Drury, *Farmer-Premier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 18-50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-54.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 99, 100.

¹⁰ Edmund Zavitz, *Report of the Department of Forests, 1934*, Ontario Sessional Papers, 1934, 108.

¹¹ Archives of Ontario, *Ernest Charles Drury Papers*, Newspaper Clipping, MU 955; Archives of Ontario, Forestry Branch Newspaper Clippings Book, RG-18-125.

expanded to 10,525 hectares. Since 1996 Simcoe County has been exclusively responsible for management the County Forest. Its annual earnings, primarily through pine thinnings, are at least \$1.2 million. This revenue has been used to maintain the forest and to expand the forest system, which now totals 12,662 hectares in 130 tracts.¹²

While the County Forest system has been, through its well managed self-financing, a continuing success story, other legacies of afforestation in Huronia have suffered since the withdrawal of provincial leadership in the 1990s. This is most vividly witnessed by the closure of the Midhurst nursery in 1994, which ultimately became used for recreational fields for the City of Barrie. Crown lands, which were afforested, have suffered from a lack of thinning, compared to areas managed by Simcoe County Forest. The demonstration forest around the closed nursery, Springwater Provincial Park, was closed by the province on May 31, 2013. Concern that closure would encourage vandalism and gang activity resulted in a native occupation immediately afterwards, which named the park Camp Nibi. In an article for "First Nations Drum", Mohawk environmentalist Danny Beaton highlighted the views of one of the leaders of the occupation, Beth Elson of the Beausoleil First Nation. She stated that, "We are strong minded women who are here to establish a place to come together to make our nations stronger by providing spiritual guidance and traditional role modelling to benefit all nations."¹³



Orr Lake, 1930 (left) and 1970 (right).

Elson's comments about "spiritual guidance" and "traditional role modelling" highlight what was lost in the collapse of afforestation programs in the 1990s, many of which were guided by the Midhurst nursery and the surrounding Springwater Park demonstration forest. The traditions that had been established to develop afforestation programs that were dismantled in the 1990s remained valid. Their collapse had nothing to do with diminishing environmental need for tree planting on marginal farmland. Although both desertification and flooding had, by this time, diminished, newer problems of phosphorous overloading are causing similar problems. Afforestation programs are needed to provide more riparian forest cover to assist in phosphorus management to increase existing fragmented forests for wildlife habitat and the protection of forest health from storms and diseases. The success of past afforestation efforts can be seen by referring to the various watershed report cards of the two conservation authorities that bisect Huronia through an east-west division. To the west the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority measures the degree of forest cover and related water issues in watersheds flowing into Georgian Bay. East of Georgian Bay's watershed is the concern of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

The success of the programs that Drury and Zavitz developed in curbing desertification can be seen in the 2010 Oro Moraine Report Card. This was prepared by both Huronia authorities on behalf of the Oro-Medonte Environmental Group. Afforestation has produced a situation where fifty per cent of this former desert is now in forest cover. Thirty per cent of this forest cover is provided by Simcoe County Forests. Groundwater discharge from the Moraine supports sensitive cold water fish species such as brook trout. Large blocks of intact forest provide deer wintering areas and support species of special concern such as the redheaded woodpecker. Government agronomy extension has complimented afforestation. Unlike the situation in the 19th century there is little intensive cropping on lands on the Oro Moraine that are in agriculture use. These tend to be hayfields and grasslands. They support a number of bird species that require large tracts of open grasslands to survive, such as bobolink, eastern meadowlark and the upland sandpiper.¹⁴

Similar success can be seen in the report card for another area that Drury and Zavitz studied in their 1905 horse and buggy tour of deserts, Orr Lake. Its watershed has 37.3 per cent forest cover, largely as a result of the afforestation efforts of Simcoe County

¹² "Simcoe County Forests" Simcoe County, accessed Nov. 28, 2013, http://www.simcoe.ca/ws_cos/groups/public/@pub-cos-ccd/documents/web_content/wscos_011638.pdf.

¹³ Danny Beaton, "Ojibway Elder Beth Elson Leads in Defending Springwater Provincial Park", *First Nations Drum*, June 2013, 4,5.

¹⁴ "Oro Moraine 2010 Report Card".

Forests. Its report card prepared in 2012 by the Nottawasaga Conservation Authority notes how Orr Lake supports a “robust warm water fish community dominated by species such as smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, yellow perch, northern pike, pumpkin seed and black crappie.” The fish support impressive bird life such as blue heron, osprey, Caspian and common terns. Phosphorous and nitrogen overloading has been prevented by good riparian cover in the watershed with fifty per cent of Orr Lake’s tributary streams having forest riparian cover at least thirty metres wide.¹⁵

The other Huronia watershed that was dramatically improved by the massive afforestation efforts of Drury and Zavitz is Pine River. It benefited greatly from the massive tree plantings conducted by Boy Scouts in the vicinity of the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in Angus, and the associated afforestation on Camp Borden. Some 41.8 per cent of the Pine watershed, once desertified wastelands, is in forest cover. Riparian habitat covers 64.9 per cent of its streams, which provide excellent cold water brook trout habitat. Many of the forests here are in the Simcoe County forest system and that of Dufferin County, which was initiated by the inspiration of visits to the Midhurst nursery.¹⁶

The uneven nature of afforestation and forest protection in Huronia are contributing threats to the health of Lake Simcoe. The lake’s watershed has only 35 per cent forest cover, and it is the goal of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan to increase this by an additional five percent. The proposed 40 per cent is below most of the forest cover that is prevailing in many healthy streams in Huronia flowing into Georgian Bay. Much of the existing 35 percent forest cover is under the threat of development. For instance, the North Guillimbury Forest, which is one of the ten largest forests in the Lake Simcoe Watershed, is subject to a residential development proposal.^{17 18}

The 35 per cent average, moreover, reflects a situation where the higher forest cover in areas such as the part of the afforested Oro Moraine that drains into Lake Simcoe, is averaged into highly deforested intensely farmed watersheds such as the West Holland Creek. The West Holland Creek has only 16 percent forest cover. It is the greatest contributor of phosphorous to Lake Simcoe from predominately-agricultural landscapes.¹⁹



Left: Midhurst plantation; Right: Hendrie Forest, 1931.

The problem of lack of forest cover facing Lake Simcoe and the collapse of afforestation programs is best illustrated by the 63.5 kilometre Maskinonge River watershed. It received the lowest “D” rating in the latest Lake Simcoe Watershed Report Card of 18 major contributing rivers. Conditions here are worse than streams in predominately-urban watersheds in the Barrie area. It has the lowest forest cover, only 13 per cent, of any of the identified watersheds examined in the report card. It also has the lowest percentage of riparian forest cover identified in any Lake Simcoe watershed, only 44 per cent. The report card indicates it has poor surface water quality and a low number of benthic species. As a warning sign the subwatershed study photographed cows walking across the Maskinonge at a point lacking any forest buffer. The watershed, which has experienced little urban development in over 40 years, and is outside the Oak Ridges Moraine, is valuable as a time warp demonstration of the consequences of low forest cover.

¹⁵ “Orr Lake 2010 Report Card,” Nottawasaga Conservation Authority, accessed Nov. 27, 2013,

(http://www.nvca.on.ca/ws_par/groups/public/@pub/@nvca/documents/web_content/wspar_038865.pdf).

¹⁶ “2013 Pine River Subwatershed Health Check,” Nottawasaga Conservation Authority, accessed Nov. 27, 2013

(http://www.nvca.on.ca/ws_par/groups/public/@pub/@nvca/documents/web_content/wspar_043925.pdf).

¹⁷ North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance, Letter to Mayor Robert Grossi, Chair Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, May 13, 2013, accessed Nov. 27, 2013,

(<http://www.savengforest.org/lsrcapdf>).

¹⁸ “Lake Simcoe Protection Plan”, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, accessed Nov. 27, 2013,

(http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/resources/STD01_076301.html).

¹⁹ David Donnelly, “Continuing to Promote Sprawl in Simcoe County, Campaign Lake Simcoe’s Response to the Proposed Simcoe Amendment to the Growth Plan, January 31, 2010”, accessed November 27, 2013, (<http://donnellylaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Environmental-Defence-Growth-Plan-Simcoe-Amendment-EBR-Response.pdf>).

Travelling here is going into a time tunnel of life in Ontario before Edmund Zavitz. For the past 20 years there has been no summer flow in major stretches of the Maskinonge. Sights of dying fish in landlocked pools are a common occurrence.^{20 21 22}

The threats posed to Lake Simcoe show the current challenges that afforestation and protection of existing forests must address in southern Ontario. While there are no longer any massive sand dunes sweeping across the province from deforestation to be photographed, there are issues related to phosphorus overloading. Pollutant trading involving planting trees, especially in riparian areas, could be a tool help reduce phosphorus overload.²³

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²⁰ "Lake Simcoe Watershed Report Card, Updates 2008, 2009", Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, accessed Nov. 27, 2013, http://www.lsrca.on.ca/about/watershed_report_card.php.

²¹ "Maskinonge Subwatershed Plan 2010", Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, accessed Nov. 27, 2013, http://www.lsrca.on.ca/pdf/reports/maskinonge_subwatershed_2010.pdf;

²² Phinjo Gombu, "A River Used to Run Through It", September 11, 2007, Toronto Star

²³ Ontario Ministry of the Environment, *Lake Simcoe Phosphorous Reduction Strategy* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010); Conservation Ontario, *Watershed Economic Incentives through Phosphorous Trading and Water Quality* (Toronto, Conservation Ontario, 2003).

J.H. Keeso & Sons Limited Sawmill – 140 Plus Years

By Richard Keeso

J.H. Keeso & Sons Ltd. is a hardwood sawmill located in Listowel, Perth County. It has been owned and operated by the Keeso family since its inception in 1872. Known in the 1800's as the Queen's Bush, this area of Ontario was rich in farmland and so hundreds of acres of timber were cleared for crops. Towards the latter part of the 19th century a number of sawmills that had flourished in the past doubted the longevity of the resource and began to shut down.



1921 newspaper photo of the Keeso mill.

Contrary to that thinking, John Keeso was operating a portable threshing business at the time for area farmers and felt there was still sufficient hardwood to mill. He began running his steam locomotive to timber stands, and conducted production right on site. Sometime before 1921 a permanent sawmill was built.

Back then, the mill was shut down so that the entire crew could go to the woods to cut, skid and load with teams of horses. The loads of logs on a single axle truck with solid rubber tires would arrive at the mill where another team was brought out from the barn to unload them. With sufficient footage of soft grey elm (white), rock elm, hard and soft maple, cherry, beech, white ash and basswood the mill would start up and production would begin again.

Hours of operation were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 6 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday. It is no wonder I was told everyone lived for Saturday night. Our men were tough and strong, handled chains for log skidding with the teams and seldom wore gloves, which were considered a nuisance, even in the winter. Almost everyone smoked in the steam powered sawmill, which was entirely built from wood. Some of the machines even ran on wooden bearings, which were oiled frequently. There were no live rollers - none of the heavy lumber moved unless it was pushed along or picked up by hand. It was common to cut hardwood plank weighing in excess of 300 pounds.

There were a lot of boys born into the Keeso family. I had an Uncle Frank who was the seventh son of the seventh son. I spent a lot of time with my uncle and he believed he had the eyesight of a hawk. He was a big lanky man with long arms and huge hands and was known to be very strong. A cousin of mine had a picture of Frank holding up a Model T Ford with two guys sitting on the bumper.



Huge Rock Elm logs – undated photo.

When my grandfather acquired the business he gave it the name J.H. Keeso & Sons Ltd.; the sons being my father and Uncle Jack. Jack died suddenly in 1972 and I became heir apparent as I had no brothers and four sisters. I had been around the sawmill all my life but finished school in 1978 and have worked at the sawmill since.

In 1984 the mill was moved from just outside of Listowel to Wallace Township and continues to upgrade and improve with computer technologies. It is interesting to note that the average distance we go for logs is less than 100 kilometres. Our timber is purchased largely from private landowners for whom we write silvicultural prescriptions, and our woodlands crews are the best in the business. Our lumber is shipped worldwide by our

customers and we are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council so we will be recognized globally as continuing good stewards of our forest resource.

In 2005 monumentally adverse winds slammed the hardwood lumber business. The housing crisis, coupled with the financial crisis, spelled the end of over 1,000 North American sawmills, and fully 45 percent of production ceased. We were never without sales during this time but timber prices fell by two-thirds and consequently no one was interested in selling their trees. Writing silvicultural prescriptions for landowners who wanted to look after their timber was our mainstay for the next 5 to 6 years. Things are looking cautiously better now.

Climate change affects our business daily. We work in the woods every day we can to keep logs ahead of our mill. Unknown to most, on all of those days we are improving our forests' ability to sequester carbon by improving the growth rate and genetics of the stand. Climate change, though, is reducing the number of days we can cross farm fields to get to woodlands to work. Heavy rain events saturate the land for days. Climate change ultimately has led to a reduction in the number of loggers as there are not enough working days in a year to make it worthwhile financially.

A fast or thrifty growing forest is a far more efficient carbon sink than one in which the trees are over mature and regressing. Our foresters mark mature, diseased and declining trees to make room for healthier, faster growing trees that have the genetics to seed more trees like them.

I believe tree planting is one of our best methods of combating climate change. It is visible, a rewarding and able project for one and old and its effectiveness scientifically proven. On the other hand, hardwoods, which we work in, are best sustained by our efforts to emulate nature. Tens of thousands of seedlings are waiting on most forest floors for a break in the canopy overhead to be released as the next generation.

Contrary to what the general population believes, we are environmentalists. After all if we were not good stewards of this resource, our future would be pretty dim.

Additional Photos



1912 Locomotive threshing machine on the gangway.
Used for sawing in the bush in the winter.
Keeso boys on the machine.



1945 picture of the Bell steam locomotive
(1933 vintage) that powered the Keeso mill
until the switch to electric in 1957.

'The Forest Rangers' TV Series

By Clayton Self

Forest Fire Fighting, Guides Provided, Fishing Trips, Animals Trained, Rescue Work Undertaken, Main Depot Of The Indian River Junior Forest Rangers ...

Does this ring a bell? What Canadian kid growing up in the 1960's or 1970's could forget the immensely popular television series The Forest Rangers or the opening melodic theme? This catchy musical piece met the colourful backdrop of wilderness scenes set in Ontario's Great Outdoors. Here, a group of kids - Junior Forest Rangers - live, work and play in a large Hudson's Bay fort, while their older and wiser friends from the village of Indian River keep an eye out for them. (Indian River lies on the southeast side of Algonquin Park, northeast of Barry's Bay, with a mythical population of 317). The Junior Rangers were the envy of many kids the world over for they came complete with a fort, CB radios, walkie-talkies, canoes, horses, ranger t-shirts, a Smokey the Bear flag and most of all - "ADVENTURE!!"

The Rangers often managed to become heroes by putting out forest fires, rescuing people and thwarting villains, with the aid of an RCMP officer named Sergeant Brian Scott (legendary Canadian actor Gordon Pinsent); the Indian River "Department of Lands and Forests" Chief Forest Ranger, George Keeley; and the local Metis-Ojibway guide, Joe Two Rivers.

The Junior Forest Rangers live in a "never-never land, unmarred by schools or parents, in which the only rules are the rules of conservation." Though the kids always manage to get involved in trouble, there is little violence involved; mainly just threats from wayward adults who put themselves in danger because they didn't heed the advice of the Chief Ranger. In the end, the wrongdoers are usually brought back to the Chief Ranger's (Department of Lands and Forests) office and scolded, but are rarely handed over to the law. However, there were occasions where lawbreakers were brought to Sgt. Scott's office for punishment.

The Forest Rangers series was seen on The CBC every Saturday afternoon at 5 pm EST and was in production from 1963 to 1965. It has remained in syndication ever since, popping up on different channels the world over. As the CBC Times wrote in a 1966 column, "The Norwegians called it Skogwokterklubben. We know it as "The Forest Rangers." But in any language it's "Great," according to young viewers in the 40 countries where this popular Canadian-made outdoor adventure series is seen." Countries as far away as Australia, Hungary, Portugal, Peru, Argentina, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, The Philippines and Hong Kong had the show running on their TV sets.

The show became the most profitable and successful TV show in Canadian history up to the mid 1960's. It was also one of the first programs in the world to be filmed in high production colour. Looking back it's hard to believe that 104 complete episodes were made in the span of only 2.5 years.

Production of the Series

Maxine Samuels was the Executive Producer of the show, which was in production between 1963 and 1965. In the early '60s, she was looking for an idea to sell to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation about children. Finally she just asked the CBC what they wanted: so they told her they wanted an "outdoor adventure series for kids." That's when she came up with the premise for "The Forest Rangers."

Originally, there was a plan in 1959 to do a show called "The Forest Ranger." These plans fell through; that is, until 1963, when Ms. Samuels brought her own Junior Forest Rangers into the works. The name of the production company was ASP and "The Forest Rangers" became the first Canadian-made TV series in full colour. The CBC loved it.

The show was filmed just north of the village of Kleinburg, located today in the City of Vaughan, at the Toronto International Studios. There was a ranch on the grounds in those days called the Circle M Ranch, which was just down in the Humber Valley off Highway 27.

Ms. Samuels' crew quickly began building roads and bridges. Building facades were erected to make the mythical town of Indian River; and luckily, they also found the remains of an old Hudson's Bay fort, which was left over from the TV series of the same name. This became the kids' headquarters.



The main studio, however, was a large grey building on the grounds where all the indoor scenes were shot. Maxine hired veteran English filmmaker Ted Holliday as the producer and he in turn hired all the directors, cinematographers, actors and film processors. Many of the ideas for the show came from authentic stories.

Once filming began in early 1963 things looked promising. The show was filmed at a torrid pace (about two episodes per week). Usually two episodes were filmed simultaneously. There were two film crews used - one in Kleinburg and one in Northern Ontario to get scenes for forest fires, fire tower lookouts, lakes and thick forest brush.

To get special effects for forest fires and the use of wild animals, the Department of Lands and Forests was recruited. They overlooked and managed the fires that were often set off screen with smoke bombs. However, it was noted that in real-life situations of forest fire fighting, the Junior Rangers would not have been involved. Ms. Samuels gave the kids special license to take part in all of the action though.

Joe Two Rivers

Joe Two Rivers (played by Michael Zenon), Indian River's Ojibway guide, was one of the show's major stars. He appeared in almost every episode from all three seasons. He was the junior ranger's best friend and often accompanied them on their adventures. His doeskin jacket was authentic, and was made to fit him especially by Chief Floating Cloud of the Brantford Reserve.

Michael had to be taught the tricks of the backwoods by real natives or members of the Department of Lands and Forests. An Ojibway named Isaac Beaulieu often came out to Kleinburg to teach him and the Junior Rangers how to set bear traps, how to send smoke signals and how to track and mark a trail so others could follow.

Reunions

In the year 2000 I decided to build a website in honour of the show. I also contacted all of the Junior Rangers by phone. My website soon began attracting a fan base, so in 2004 I decided to organize a reunion event for both the cast and fans. It was a resounding success. We had six Junior Rangers in attendance. Since that time the online fan base has continually grown, so another reunion event, organized by fan, John Deakin, took place in June, 2013. This time we had nine Junior Rangers and Gordon Pinsent in attendance. Actors and fans actually flew in from Europe to be there with us in Kleinburg, Ontario.



The cast at the 2013 reunion.
Photo Credit: Janice Savona.

The show's appeal to those who enjoy conserving nature and who love the outdoors clearly continues to this day.

Further Information

Further information on the series is available at Clay's website:

<http://forestrangers.bravehost.com>

The Searchmont Plantations – A Mystery Solved

By Margaret Carruthers

I have been working in the Sault Ste. Marie District of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources since 2005. The core of my job is essentially a silviculture forester. The silviculture records are in various states of repair in Sault Ste. Marie District; they range from meticulously kept in Blind River Area office (the records for former Blind River District and Kirkwood Forest) to chaos for those in Sault Ste. Marie District. This is unfortunate for me, as the District Environmental Assessment Forester. What we now call 'historical silviculture' - the areas where silviculture was first applied locally - are scattered, and parts are missing for the Algoma Area forests. The maps became separated from many of the records during three office relocations in the 1990's. I can still search the paper records for treated areas by looking for oldest treated areas first. For those who don't know, meticulous records were kept of those early treatments. We are in the process of scanning and digitizing these records, when resources are available to do so.

Due to the separation of the records, I was mystified when I read a record of several stands that were burned, and then planted 20 to 30 years later. Because the maps were not available, I did not know the location. During a field tour about a year later, Mike Thompson from Bonnifero Millworks enlightened about this site.

We know about larger areas of afforestation in Ontario, or some people do. My mystery site is just east/northeast of Searchmont. The stands straddle the Goulais River. This area was settled in the early 1900's like many others. The soil is excellent for growing trees, but unfortunately for the settlers, not good enough for growing crops for very long. The land was abandoned and sat fallow for 20 or 30 years. Some forward-thinking forester (aren't we all?) recognized the opportunity to restore this area to forest. Red pine mixed with jack pine was planted on the flat areas closest to the river. Jack pine was planted on a sloping area to the north. My theory is that the sloped site probably burned up in slash clearing fires, or was cleared for firewood. It is too steep to have been cultivated.

Federal forestry staff became interested in using this site because of its proximity to Sault Ste. Marie. Forestry Canada planted some experimental treatments here. The treatments include alternate rows of species, machine-planted jack pine and a pure-species plantation of white pine. These treatments are located on the west/northwest side of the Whitman Dam Road. These treatments are still more or less intact. Part of a trail of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs runs through and past the federal trial areas. The trials are not maintained. The forest company is wondering what to do with some of these sites (machine planted jack pine).



**The location of the Searchmont "Mystery Plantations"
(general area outlined in red).
(Source of base map: Google Maps).**



The red pine/jack pine plantations have been thinned twice. The pre-commercial plantation thinning was funded by the Forestry Futures Trust, and occurred in the late 1990's. Commercial thinning has taken place since then (in the last 5 years). The forest management company, Clergue Forest Management Inc., believes that in terms of productivity, the afforested red pine site may be better suited to growing white spruce. Spruce has begun to infiltrate the site naturally.

Time ticks on, and during the Ontario Living Legacy process, most of the Goulais River became part of the Algoma Headwaters Signature Site. The area down the slope from the site described is now a waterway provincial park. Easy access to the park exists by foot from the edge of the red pine stand down a trail just wide enough for a quad to drive down to the floodplain and the river. If someone told me that I could build a cabin for myself on Crown land in SSM District, the start of this trail would be my choice of location. The first time that I saw this trail, looking east across the river, the leaves were just turning and the fog was lifting, with the red pine plantations at my back; it warms the cockles of a forester's heart.

If you are interested in visiting these sites, the access is easy: the plantations are location on both sides of Whitman Dam Road between (or at) kilometre one or two. Other adjacent stands are accessible from the Ranger Lake Road side. One of the stands on the east side of Goulais River was clearcut and the wood was ground for the St. Mary's Paper biofibre trial.

Species History

Editor's Comments: This article is the first part of a two-part series on the history of hemlock in Ontario. In part two the ecological history of the species will be presented.

Hemlock and the Tanning Industry of Muskoka

By Kenneth Carman Veitch

*This article is an edited version of **Chapter 37** in Kenneth Carman Veitch's book "**Bracebridge – A MUSKOKA HERITAGE**" (self-published through CreateSpace, 2013) and is reprinted here with permission of the author.*

A massive contribution to the economy of Bracebridge, in fact all of Muskoka, was the development of the leather tanning industry. Massive indeed, because the industry not only employed hundreds of people in their manufacturing operations but it was a steady source of income for many rural residents who laboured in the Muskoka wilderness cutting hemlock trees in order to harvest the bark; so essential in tannery operations.

That is why the industry came here. In that era, tanneries turned cowhides into leather through a process that involved using tannic acid, which was derived from hemlock bark. Who knew, in those first days of harvesting the huge pines and hardwoods of Muskoka, that right under the noses of the logging companies there was a whole new, and valuable, industry.

The writer's grandfather, as a young man, was one of those who dropped the huge hemlock trees, stripped off the bark, loaded them onto sleighs or wagons and pulled them into Bracebridge for delivery to the tannery. Stripping a hemlock tree of its bark, while it sounds awkward and difficult, was easy as long as the tree was green and the bark was removed in strips 12 to 18 inches wide. Once a strip was started, it could be removed from the entire length of the log in minutes.

It was unfortunate though that at the start the hemlock logs were just left to decay on the forest floor; after all, there was an endless supply of nice clean pine for lumber. Besides, those in the lumber business learned quickly to avoid working with hemlock if possible because it presented a bit of a problem – slivers. To handle hemlock, lumber workers had to wear gloves; otherwise, at the end of the day they would be removing painful slivers of wood from their hands. That feature of hemlock has never changed, but what did change was that hemlock was finally recognized for its true value. In addition to the value of its bark, and aside from its slivers, it proved to be a very strong and resilient lumber product. The record will show that the timber of choice when building the Toronto subway system was hemlock, and many of the historic buildings, still standing strong and true in Muskoka towns, have hemlock foundations and roofing. The key was to keep it away from dampness.

The first tannery to arrive in Bracebridge, always referred to as the "old" tannery, was Beardmore and Company Limited. It had extensive operations in Acton, Ontario. A document on the company history entitled *A History Of Beardmore And Company Limited And Anglo Canadian Leather Company*¹ states that, "the Beardmores decided to locate their operations in Muskoka, where hemlock formed part of the 'climax forest'. The supply was considered by some to be 'inexhaustible'". In *A Good Town Grew Here*², the author notes that the Beardmores chose Bracebridge over Penetanguishene and Gravenhurst, possibly because of the availability of hydraulic power from the falls, and perhaps that it seemed to be a more progressive area, having achieved the status as a Village municipality just two years before.

As was the custom then, the company asked for financial assistance from the Village, so a referendum was put to the electorate resulting in a \$2,000.00 bonus plus a 10-year exemption from municipal taxes being approved.³ As a result, a large tannery was built in 1877 on property in Monck Township on the north side of Muskoka River purchased from John Adair. It was later the site of Canada Wood Specialties, later still of the Forgione lumber mill, and in 2013, the site of a condominium project The Waterways. The fact that the tannery was built in Monck Township didn't matter because the Village immediately expropriated the land from the township and expanded the Village boundaries. There is no comment on how that affected relations between Monck and

¹ Abbot Conway, *A History of Beardmore and Company Limited and Anglo Canadian Leather Company* (Self-Published, 1990).

² Robert J. Boyer, *A Good Town Grew Here* (Bracebridge: Herald-Gazette Press, 1975).

³ Conway, 1990.

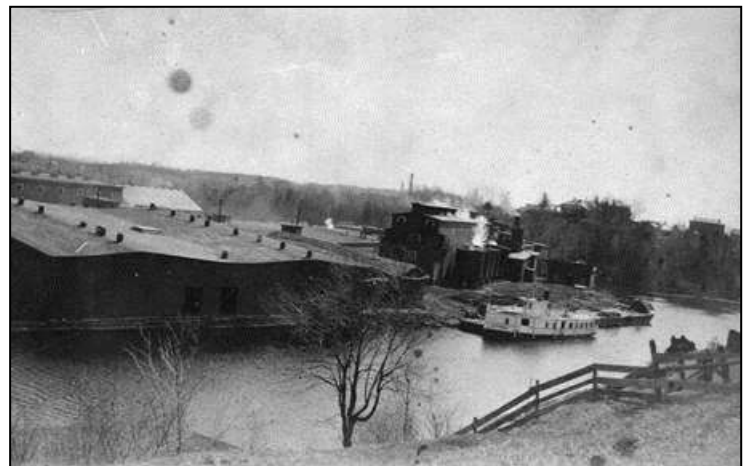
Bracebridge but it was the right thing to do, the Village having put up the incentives and did all the work in encouraging the Beardmores to settle here.

As an interesting aside, in that same year of 1877, possibly buoyed by the success of the Beardmore referendum, another application for assistance was received from Jonas Bowman and David Barber who proposed to build a tannery on land occupied in 2013 by Northern Buildal and the now unused water storage reservoir beside Bird's Bridge. G.H.O. Thomas, in his book *Bracebridge in 1884*⁴ reported that, in 1884, they were given a 10-year exemption from taxes, information that was repeated in *A Good Town Continues*⁵, but there the story seems to end. Certainly, no tannery was built on the proposed site. But Redmond Thomas in *Reminiscences*⁶ mentions a Barber Tannery that was located on the northeast corner of Hiram Street and MacDonald Street, for many years the location of the Newark boat-fender factory. In fact, at one time there were four tanneries in operation in Bracebridge, including the Beardmore Tannery, the Anglo-Canadian Tannery, Barber's and another located on the northeast corner of Monck Road and Wellington Street owned and operated by E. Garrett.

It was a wonderful day in this part of Muskoka when word got out that this wonderful company (the Beardmore Tannery) had chosen Bracebridge as their home. Writers of history variously refer to the Beardmore Tannery, the Muskoka Tannery and Muskoka Leather Company all in the same breath but there is no doubt they were one and the same. No matter, the town and its residents were ecstatic, and no wonder. There would be jobs for everyone. As part of the deal the company had to hire at least 12 men, which proved to be easy because within a short period of time they had 30 employees and eventually became one of the largest tanneries in Canada. It was so active in fact, that in order to improve access to the tannery for the many sleighs and wagons hauling tanbark there, the steep hill on the easterly section of Ontario Street where it intersected with Victoria Street was closed to traffic, and Rosemount Avenue (which quickly became known as Tan Bark Hill) was built, connecting Quebec Street with Victoria Street and the westerly section of Ontario Street. Both Rosemount Avenue and the westerly section of Ontario Street became part of Quebec Street in more recent years.

The Beardmore Tannery was a very successful operation and in 1882, just 5 years after start-up, perhaps to take advantage of an offer too good to refuse, the tannery was sold to Charles W. Tillson. One report states that it was when Tillson took over that it became known as the Muskoka Leather Company or Muskoka Tannery. However, the writer can remember seeing a large picture in the Town Office files of a tannery operation with the caption Tillson Tannery. Nevertheless, it didn't stay that way for very long because Mr. Tillson died in 1890 and the Beardmores were once again in the tannery business in Bracebridge.

There was a number of interesting situations that occurred during the Beardmore experience in Bracebridge. In 1910 the company made a pitch to the town to have a railway siding extended to their property. A survey was drawn up for it to travel from Manitoba Street along Wharf Road and Dill Street across Wellington Street to their tannery.



The Anglo-Canadian Leather Company was a huge contributor to the Bracebridge economy. Source: Kenneth Carman Veitch Collection.

Following a discussion with reeves of the adjoining townships another plan came into being, that the siding already serving the J. D. Shier Lumber mill be extended across the river on a swing bridge which would have been located near the location of the Wellington Street bridge of 2013. Both plans were abandoned for financial reasons, fortunately, considering that just 12 years later in 1922, the Beardmores pulled up stakes and moved their operations back to Acton.

Things had changed in the tanning business. New chemicals had been developed that served the same purpose as hemlock bark and the need to be close to that resource became less important. In any event, the "inexhaustible supply of hemlock" in Muskoka forests had become exhausted to the extent that there was difficulty in meeting the needs of the two huge tanneries that had made Bracebridge the tannery capital of Canada

⁴ G.H.O. Thomas, *Bracebridge in 1884* (Bracebridge: Bracebridge Gazette, 1934).

⁵ 125th Anniversary Committee, *A Good Town Continues* (Bracebridge: Town of Bracebridge, 1999).

⁶ Redmond Thomas, *Reminiscences* (Bracebridge: Herald- Gazette Press, 1969).

Some residents were not unhappy about the plant closing down. A number complained to town council that the water in the river “...down past the Beardmore Tannery is hardly fit for a dog” during a 1903 debate about public swimming in the river⁷. It was at that time when new rules were drawn up regulating the hours, incredible as it might seem, to control when swimming was allowed and including a prohibition against swimming in the nude. There is no comment about increased sales of bathing suits as a result of that council action. Some no doubt would have missed the bridge provided each winter by the tannery when they attached their scows end to end across the Muskoka River that allowed the residents to access the other side instead of having to make the long walk into town where they would cross Bird’s Bridge.

While there were four tanneries in Bracebridge at one point, there were two major ones, the Beardmore Tannery (the “old” tannery) and the Anglo-Canadian Tannery (the “new” tannery). Although they were competitors, they partnered for many years, sharing logging camps, helping the community in many ways and joining forces when there was need. A good example of that, at least amongst the employees, was in 1916 when an attempt was made to bring 10 Austrian prisoners of war into Bracebridge to work at Muskoka Leather Company. In a demonstration of intense patriotic fervour, the employees of both tanneries refused to work beside these enemies of Canada and an “indignation” meeting was held at the town hall with the Town Council. Many residents of the area agreed with the employees and, mysteriously, in the late night hours following the meeting, a house that had been prepared to house the prisoners burned to the ground.

A.W. Beardmore had sent a letter that was read at the meeting suggesting that if the company plan to employ these prisoners was opposed then he would close the plant, making one wonder if the negative reaction to it played a part in the Beardmores leaving Bracebridge just 6 years later. The prisoners arrived by train and were delivered to the tannery office where they were met by an angry mob. In spite of Mr. Beardmore’s threatening letter, the tannery manager, Peter A. Smith, decided to have the prisoners taken to their Acton operation and, as a result, Police Chief McConnell escorted them to the train station. The angry mob, clearly displaying their determined stand, followed them and remained standing in the rain for hours until the prisoners were on the train; no doubt cheering as they watched the steam engine chug out of town.

It was in 1890 that a local newspaper reported that David W. Alexander negotiated with the town to create what became known as the new tannery. The town agreed, again based on a referendum to the people, to give them a \$2,000.00 bonus, and an even greater economic life came to Bracebridge in the form of the Anglo-Canadian Leather Company. In *Early Days in Muskoka*⁸ it is stated that the same approach was made to the council of Huntsville in 1891.

To the people of Bracebridge, who already had the Beardmore Tannery operating very successfully since 1877, the news of another huge tannery operation on the horizon was especially exciting. The land they chose was on the south side of the Muskoka River near the J. D. Shier Lumber Mill in Macaulay Township; at that time not part of the newly, and proudly, formed TOWN municipality of Bracebridge, but no matter. An October 1890 newspaper reported that “The residents of this section applied to be taken into the town. A private bill of the Legislative Assembly would be required for the annexation and the Council set aside funds for this purpose, also offering \$150.00 to the Township of Macaulay if the Council there would assist in having the act passed. This section was to become Ward IV of the town.”⁹

As in the case of the Beardmore Tannery setting up in a corner of Monck Township, the Town of Bracebridge brought the area into its jurisdiction. It included the property that became the home of the Anglo-Canadian Leather Company as well as several homes and the commercial operations of the J. D. Shier lumber mill and Singleton Brown’s shingle mill.

As noted in the newspaper report, the annexed area was designated for electoral purposes Ward 4 of the municipality, giving birth to a heritage occasionally heard to this day when reference is made to this part of town as the “4th Ward”, or “across the tracks”. If some of the residents in that area got the impression that they were considered second class, Johnny-come-lately citizens of the town, they needn’t have been concerned because from that side of the tracks came many entrepreneurs and astute business people who worked hard to make sure Bracebridge continued to be a thriving business community.

As one might expect, writers of the day referred to the new tannery by a variety of names. *Early Days in Muskoka*¹⁰ states that “...a tannery was established in Huntsville in 1891 by the Shaw Cassels and Company owned and operated by the Anglo-Canadian Leather Company.” In *A History Of Beardmore And Company Limited And Anglo Canadian Leather Company Limited*¹¹, the proper spelling of

⁷ Muskoka Herald, *60 Years Ago and Today* (Bracebridge: Muskoka Herald, June 30, 1927).

⁸ George W. Boyer, *Early Days in Muskoka* (Bracebridge: Herald-Gazette Press 1970).

⁹ Bracebridge Herald-Gazette, *100 Years Ago* (Bracebridge: Bracebridge Herald-Gazette, October 31, 1990).

¹⁰ Boyer, 1970.

¹¹ Conway, 1990.

the word Cassels is Cassils. However, that document also states that “...as supplies of hemlock bark began to decline, the Shaws began closing the smaller tanneries, until by 1905, when the Anglo Canadian Leather Co. Limited was formed, tanning had been consolidated into two large tanneries at Bracebridge and Huntsville.” Then again, in *A Good Town Grew Here*¹² it is stated that in 1905 the “Anglo Canadian Leather Company was the new name for the Huntsville and Bracebridge Tannery Co”.

So who cares. The result is still the same. The brothers C.O. Shaw and W.S. Shaw were movers and shakers in this industry. They were first class entrepreneurs and had a vision for the future few could ever possibly possess. In *Power From Water*¹³ it is stated that W.S. (William Sutherland) Shaw from Boyne Michigan managed both Bracebridge and Huntsville operations but Huntsville later came under the management of C.O. Shaw. What a find the Shaw brothers were for Muskoka! C.O. Shaw was the creator of the Anglo Canadian Band, (according to news reports of the day it was originally called the Anglo-Canadian Italian Band), and builder of the fabulous and renowned Bigwin Inn resort on Lake of Bays.

With his brother running the Huntsville operation, W. S. Shaw assumed management of the Bracebridge tannery. He also had a determined entrepreneurial flair and vision of the future and it didn’t take long before he put it to use.

The town council had already been active in trying to develop a generating station to produce electricity primarily to power streetlights; they had even entered into an agreement with a company to do so after a referendum to authorize such a move was approved by the ratepayers in 1889. They were way ahead of their time. But nothing happened and legal action was taken against the company for non-performance. They got nowhere with that, however, and as they were searching for an alternative, to their delight W.S. Shaw stepped forward in 1891 and advised that his tannery plan included a generating station. Shaw was a man who got things done. His generating station was completed in 1892 and electrically powered streetlights appeared on town streets that same year, the town having partnered with Shaw to make that happen.

The town was still determined to create their own generating station though so more meetings and referendums were held resulting in approval to proceed. They acquired the land at the foot of Bracebridge Falls from Alfred Hunt, in spite of opposition expressed by Samuel Armstrong, Henry J. Bird and Singleton Brown – all respected businessmen. As a result, a secondary plan was put forward to purchase the generating station of Shaw and in October 1894 Bracebridge became the first municipality in Canada to own and operate a water-powered electricity generating system.

The Anglo Canadian Leather Company, by whatever name, was an enormous boost to the Bracebridge economy, especially considering it was in addition to that provided by the Beardmore Tannery. Those were great years in Bracebridge. No doubt, they damaged the water quality of our rivers, but in fairness, they did not know the effect their discharges would have on aquatic life. The same could be said of the logging companies that came to Muskoka in the mid-1850s and decimated the landscape thinking the forests here would last forever, not realizing that in a mere 40 or 50 years there would be little standing timber left to support the industry. It took more than 100 years for the forests to resemble the original that stood here, and while forestry still exists as a viable industry in Muskoka, it is now done in a sustainable fashion ensuring that it will last as a viable business, albeit without the volume that existed in those early days.

As good as the tannery business was in Muskoka it was not without its problems. There was often difficulty getting tanbark out of the bush some winters due to mild weather conditions; heavy frost was necessary to firm up the draw roads. In 1906 the two tanneries had 20,000 cords of tanbark in the bush that could not be accessed; the lakes did not freeze over until late January. Once out of the bush, the huge loads of bark then had to be delivered to Bracebridge over rough roads and steep hills or held until the navigation season when they could be delivered by scows. Even that had its problems because the Muskoka River often was clogged with logs being floated downstream to the mills.

Availability of workers was another problem, to the extent that imported workers were recruited from Italy (why Italy is not explained) and when one labour dispute caused 40 to leave for home others were brought in from Poland. There were strikes in 1908 and 1916 for higher wages, lockouts, constant appeals for freezes on municipal assessments and accidents, some fatal. Bert Bailey died in 1915, James Prentiss in 1923, and injuries were commonplace.

The Beardmore Tannery operation was closed in 1922. The Anglo Canadian Tannery was shut down for an indefinite period, but by 1927 it again was at capacity, employing 100 men processing 500 hides per day. The company buoyantly predicted that they would be employing 225 eventually and capable of handling 2500 hides per day. In 1930 however, calamity struck. The market for leather was mostly in the United States and in a vicious protectionist move, legislation was enacted there raising the tariff on Canadian

¹² Boyer, 1975

¹³ Robert J. Boyer, *Power from Water* (Bracebridge: Muskoka Publications Press, 1994).

leather from 27% to 50%. As a result, the Bracebridge operation was closed, or at least reduced to almost nothing, and the Huntsville operation struggled on through the great depression. The Board of Directors was prepared to declare bankruptcy, but financially astute C.W. Conway and chemist F.R. Mosbaugh were given control of the company and kept it going – but the writing was on the wall.

The last use of hemlock bark was in 1942, and since hides continued to be processed until 1960, presumably the South American chemical product quebracho replaced it. Canada Packers bought both properties in 1953, kept processing hides for 7 years in Huntsville, and used the Bracebridge buildings that had been unused for over 20 years, to raise poultry. A tragic fire in 1959 killed 4000 chickens and 3000 turkeys and the buildings were demolished in 1977.

In *A History Of Beardmore And Company Limited And Anglo Canadian Leather Company Limited*¹⁴, it is stated “... when tanneries of both Beardmore and Anglo were operating in Bracebridge, this town in the “backwoods” of Muskoka was probably the largest centre of sole leather tanning in the British Empire.” While the ready availability of hemlock bark was a prime reason for the tanneries to come to Muskoka, another reason expressed years later by Canada Packers was that it was because of the “soft water” of the Muskoka River. The Beardmore and Anglo Canadian companies were merged in 1964, both by that time apparently through with making leather.

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¹⁴ Abbott Conway, 1990.

Carl E. Atwood and the Forest Insect Laboratory at Sault Ste. Marie

By Gordon M. Howse and Harold L. Atwood

Carl Atwood was the first Officer-in-Charge of the Forest Insect Laboratory at Sault Ste. Marie. In the mid-1940s he was heavily involved in planning this new institution, which opened in 1945. Rapid expansion of its personnel and programs occurred during the next decade, but the founding Officer-in-Charge was no longer directing this activity: he had unexpectedly resigned in 1945, leaving a promising senior administrative position, and the new facility he had helped create, to join the University of Toronto as a junior faculty member in the Department of Zoology. Yet in this academic position, he contributed substantially to the Forest Insect Laboratory by training graduate students who became a major component of its scientific personnel. An explanation of these apparently paradoxical circumstances can be found by examining the influences that shaped his career.

His early life was not one that would normally lead either to a senior administrator's position or to academia. He was born in 1906, in Clyde River, Nova Scotia, a sparsely populated rural community, and lived with his family on an isolated subsistence farm where money was scarce and knowing how to do things independently was the condition of existence. He took part in cutting timber on the family's forested land, which brought in a meagre income, and in the process acquired extraordinary skills in use of axes, saws, and other rural implements, and in building construction. Through fishing and hunting, which provided essential food, and in which he excelled, he developed interests in natural history, a pursuit strongly encouraged by his mother, a former teacher. Although the family was poor, its members valued books and reading very highly.

His initial career goal was to become an elementary school teacher. After graduating from Grade 11, he taught for three years in his local community, then entered Normal School in Truro to become properly qualified. His self-acquired expertise in natural history, coupled with his broad general knowledge, attracted the attention of the science instructor, who recommended him for a scholarship at Acadia University. He also obtained summer employment in the Annapolis Valley conducting fieldwork on the solitary bees that pollinate the apple crop. He saved money by setting up a tent for summer residence and by owning few possessions. This summer work lasted several years while he continued his education, first on a scholarship at Macdonald College of McGill University, where he graduated with a B.Sc.A. degree in 1931, and then on another scholarship at the University of Toronto, where he began graduate studies in entomology, earning an M.Sc. in 1933. He elected to continue graduate work at Toronto under the supervision of the distinguished entomologist, Professor E.M. Walker, and finished his Ph.D. degree in 1937. During this period, his part-time summer work moved to Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he was a summer research assistant in forest entomology to Dr. R.E. ('Reg') Balch in the Canada Department of Agriculture. He made extensive collections of forest insects, some of which are still in museums and being used for taxonomic research. His relationship with Dr. Balch was cordial and close, and undoubtedly, this helped him to obtain a permanent position as a forest entomologist in the Canada Department of Agriculture.

His full-time employment began in 1937 with a move to Ottawa, coupled with a summer assignment directing research work and forest insect surveys at the small Field Station in Laniel, Quebec. The first summer he and his family lived in a tent near the Field Station. Initially, with the aid of local workers, he constructed a laboratory building and insectary from logs cut nearby. His superiority in woodcraft and tool use earned him the respect of the locals, who gave him the sobriquet 'a good man with the axe'. In his spare time, he also constructed a summer cabin for his family's accommodation about a mile down the lake, and added more buildings, and vegetable gardens, as time permitted. Fuel-wood, and fish and game, were obtained in off-hours. The combination of fieldwork on insects, and living an independent life style, was one that matched his early training and which he found congenial. He traveled extensively over bad roads and in forested areas to conduct surveys around Laniel and in northeastern Ontario. Winters in Ottawa were spent analyzing results, writing reports, and planning future operations.



Carl Atwood on the Toulousteouk River, Quebec:
Summer consultancy, 1954.



**Laboratory log building at the Laniel Field Station, 1940s.
Constructed by Carl Atwood and local assistants.**

Interestingly, he left a lasting impression on the Laniel community, and is considered to be a significant part of the community's history. This was officially recognized in the summer of 2013 in a ceremony that opened a permanent display of historical murals, one of which depicts the Forest Insect Field Station, the site of which is now in the hands of private owners.

In the mid-1940s plans were underway in Ottawa for the Forest Insect Laboratory at Sault Ste. Marie. This plan was a co-operative arrangement between the Forest Biology Division of the Canadian Department of Agriculture and the Department of Lands and Forests of Ontario. The agreement called for the latter to construct the laboratory, and for the former to equip, staff, and operate it, and to conduct more effective forest insect surveys and entomological research in Northern Ontario.

The choice of Sault Ste. Marie was apparently based upon several factors: a central location in Northern Ontario; access to regions of Northern Ontario, including the Algoma Region, that were threatened by damaging spruce budworm outbreaks in the 1940s; presence of the Provincial Air Service, which could be used for transportation and surveys; availability of rail, boat, and road routes to different parts of Northern Ontario. Carl Atwood was selected as the first Officer-in-Charge of the unbuilt facility in 1943 and was promptly drawn into the planning process and the complex negotiations between the Provincial and Federal departments, as his surviving journals reveal. The two principals in these negotiations were J.A. Brodie, Chief of Timber Management, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, and J.J. deGryse, Chief of Forest Insect Investigations, Canada Department of Agriculture. Carl Atwood was engaged in numerous meetings, especially in 1944, with these officials in particular, and with architects in Toronto, and equipment suppliers in New York. In the spring of 1944, he and his family moved to Sault Ste. Marie where he designed and supervised the construction of an insectary and field station at Point aux Pins, on the outskirts of the city. He was assigned a small nucleus of survey and research staff, and was provided with temporary office space by the Provincial Air Service while planning for the main laboratory was completed.

Construction of this laboratory, at the corner of Queen and Church Streets, occupied much of 1945. But before the new laboratory was put into operation, he resigned to join the Department of Zoology, University of Toronto, as part of a program to train more students for careers in entomological research. He was replaced by Dr. Malcolm Prebble, who was transferred from Victoria, BC, to become the second Officer-in-Charge of the insect lab; and it was under his very effective direction that the subsequent large expansion of personnel and programs proceeded.



Forest Insect Laboratory, Sault Ste. Marie: Architect's drawing, 1944.

The reasons for the departure of Carl Atwood to academia can be traced to his strong preference for field work and research, where his early training could be used to best advantage; his early affinity for teaching; his rapidly developing attachment to the cause of conservation; and his realization that as Officer-in-Charge of an expanding institute, he would be increasingly bound to an office job for which he felt less suited. He was presciently aware that, in accordance with the Peter Principle, he was at risk of being "promoted to his level of incompetence". He felt that by moving to Toronto, he would have more independence and be able to make contributions more in keeping with his inclinations and abilities. As his daughter, writer Margaret Atwood, has phrased it: "My father did what he did because it allows him to do what he does. " ("Unearthing Suite", 1983).

In Toronto, he taught forest entomology to undergraduate forestry students; contributed to biology teaching for arts and science undergraduates; and supervised and advised a large number of graduate students. An important outcome was that many of his trainees became scientific staff at the Forest Insect Laboratory (now the Great Lakes Forestry Centre) in Sault Ste. Marie. The following thirteen students (including year of graduation and degree) were employees in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s: Bill Wellington, 1947, Ph.D.; Robert (Bob) Blais, 1950, Ph.D.; Richard (Dick) Belyea, 1951, Ph.D.; James (Jim) Fettes, 1951, Ph.D.; Calvin (Cal) Sullivan, 1951, M.S.A.; Arthur (Art) Rose, 1952, M.A.; Calvin (Cal) Kirby, 1952, M.S.A.; L. A. (Les) Lyons, 1953, M.S.A.; George W.

Green, 1953, M.A.; Kenneth (Ken) Griffiths, 1953, M.A.; Arthur (Art) Ghent, 1954, M.A.; Philip (Phil) Pointing, 1958, Ph.D.; and Paul Syme, 1962, Ph.D. Several of these people eventually moved to academic positions, mostly in Canada. Three former students were employees of the Fredericton insect laboratory: Charles Miller, 1949, M.A.; Don Cameron, 1950, M.A.; and Reginald (Reg) Underwood, 1951, M.A. One worked at the Calgary laboratory: Ronald (Ron) Stark, 1951, M.A. Altogether, these alumni made major contributions to the Forest Insect Laboratory in Sault Ste. Marie, and beyond that, to the Canadian Forest Service, and to higher education, throughout Canada.

Professor Atwood trained another 16 graduate students, some of whom took positions in universities and other institutions: Tom Freeman, 1946, Ph.D.; Sarah Morton, 1948, M.A.; Vidar Nordin, 1951, Ph.D.; Ken Turner, 1951, M.Sc.F.; William Baldwin, 1952, Ph.D.; Charles Steward, 1955, M.A. and 1959, Ph.D.; James Reid, 1957, Ph.D.; John M. Anderson, 1958, Ph.D.; Don Wood, 1959, M.A.; Gerd Knerer, 1962, M.A. and 1965, Ph.D.; Peter Moens, 1961, M.A.; Uno Paim, 1962, Ph.D.; Judith McGonigal, 1963, M.A.; Ken Fisher, 1967, M.Sc.; Earl Hartwick, 1968, Ph.D.; and Walter Baker, 1970, Ph.D. Of these students, Gerd Knerer, an immigrant to Canada from Austria, became most closely associated in research with Carl Atwood, and became his successor in the Department of Zoology, teaching and conducting research in entomology.

Dr. Atwood's most important contributions to forest protection and forest entomology in Ontario are the planning and establishment of the Forest Insect Laboratory at Sault Ste. Marie and the training of forest entomologists who became scientific staff members there. His contributions to education and fieldwork have had more impact than his scientific publications.

Carl Atwood's research contributions in entomology spanned a wide range, from a primary focus on taxonomy and distribution of several insect groups (especially solitary bees and sawflies) to embryology of sawflies, and sensory reception in mosquitoes. Many of the research projects were initiated by his graduate students rather than imposed from above, and independent work was encouraged. Among the resulting research publications, work on sawflies with O. Peck and Gerd Knerer, and on mosquitoes with Charles Steward are cited prominently in the scientific literature; several representative references are included here.

In addition to teaching and research at the University of Toronto, he contributed time and expertise to organizations and foundations devoted to conservation, land protection, and science education, including the Quetico Foundation, the Sierra Club, Toronto Anglers and Hunters, and the Royal Canadian Institute. He retained the ability to move smoothly between the world of lumber camps and bush pilots, and the realm of black ties and boardrooms. He could not have foreseen that he would also make an unwitting contribution to Canadian literature. In the poetry and fiction of his daughter, Margaret Atwood, he frequently appears thinly disguised, and will remain there while literature lasts.

Selected Publications by Carl E. Atwood

Atwood, C.E. and O. Peck. 1943. "Some native sawflies of the genus *Neodiprion* attacking pines in eastern Canada." *Canadian Journal of Research* 21d(5): 109-144.

Atwood, C.E. 1961. "Present status of the family *Diprionidae* (Hymenoptera) in Ontario." *Proc. Entomological Soc. Ont.* 91: 205-15.

Knerer, G. and C.E. Atwood. 1962. "The Males of *Dialictus laevissimus* (Smith) and *D. rohweri* (Ellis) (Hymenoptera: Halictidae)." *The Canadian Entomologist* 94: 1228-1231.

Knerer, G. and C.E. Atwood. 1973. "*Diprionid* sawflies: polymorphism and speciation." *Science, USA* 179:1090-1099.

Steward, C.C. and C.E. Atwood. 1963. "The sensory organs of the mosquito antenna." *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 41: 577-594.

Bill Hutchinson and His Land

By Sherry Hambly

I first met Bill Hutchinson when I shared a table with the Ramara Historical Society (RMS) at a local event in June of this year. Bill is a Director of the society and in this capacity was helping out with the display. I was immediately intrigued by Bill because he had brought along a board demonstrating over 40 different tree species that grew locally, most of which came from his own bush. I was also intrigued because Bill is over 80 years of age – 83 to be exact, but he looks and acts much younger. The other society members all told me about Bill's conservation efforts and that I should visit his farm to see his plantations and woodlot. So I arranged with Bill to organize a visit to his property later in the summer.



Bill Hutchinson standing beside one of the black walnut trees planted in 1970.



A view of the white pine and white spruce plantations on Bill Hutchinson's land.

On a lovely warm day in July I drove up to his place and spent an enjoyable few hours walking his plantations and woodlot and learning how he came to establish the plantations. Bill was born and raised not too far from his farm. In his early days he worked at a sawmill for a bit in Orillia. In 1969 he bought a 95-acre farm, which he cash cropped until 1988, growing wheat and barley.

While at a hunt camp, Bill heard that black walnut would produce valuable logs after 25 years. So Bill set out to establish a black walnut plantation. In 1970, through the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), Bill obtained 2000 walnut seedlings, along with red pine seedlings and planted alternate rows of each on 4 acres of his land. The walnut eventually killed the red pine seedlings. Bill told me that wood from the stumps of walnut larger than 2 feet (60 cm) in diameter are used for making gun. Bill planted the walnut on a stony upland site on his land because he didn't want to pick the stones out of this piece of land.

In 1988 Bill decided to convert his farmland to plantations and engaged the OMNR to help him, through the Woodlands Improvement Act (WIA) program, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1991 (*Your Forests*, 1991). A forester from OMNR made a site visit and advised Bill to plant white pine and white spruce. Bill bought the trees from OMNR, and OMNR, in turn, planted them, in 1988 and 1989. The provisions of a WIA agreement state that the landowner must keep the plantation for a minimum of 15 years. Bill has also planted a few hickory trees over the years.



The white pine plantations are pruned and cleaned regularly.

Bill has been nurturing his plantations for 25 years now. He delimbs and cleans out the dead material by himself, regularly, throughout the year. There is some evidence of white pine blister rust and weevil damage, but for the most part the trees look very healthy, and are well on their way to producing an excellent product in the future.

We also walked Bill's woodlot, which is comprised of a mixture of species including hard maple, beech, poplar, ash, white spruce and hickory. Although his land is on a bit of a dome, there is ground water near the

surface, which makes the woodlot area damp, especially in the spring. Bill knows individual trees, and cares for them with an eye to producing fine logs in the future. Bill also told me secrets that his woodlot holds, that I won't divulge!

I found it uplifting to visit Bill and to walk his land with him. He has a wonderful knowledge of the trees that grow on his land and a dedication to managing them in a sustainable manner. Bill is a proud owner, and justly so. His woodlot and plantations are excellent examples of private land forestry and how forests can be established through assistance programs such as the Woodlot Improvement Act.



**Aerial view of Bill Hutchinson's plantations and woodlot: Pw = white pine; Wb = black walnut; Sw = white spruce; MW = mixed wood.
Base Phot from Google Maps.**

James Ruxton (1895-1983)

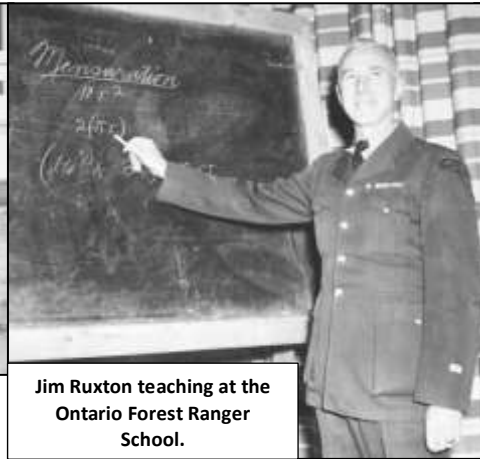
By Austin Cronk and Loretta (Ruxton) Cronk

James Ruxton was born in Cardwell Township near Rosseau, Ontario, in 1895. Jim was the son of James, a forester in British Columbia, and Mary, who kept the family farm in Rosseau. He attended a local elementary school and went to high school in Gravenhurst. From there he moved to Orillia C.I. to complete his matriculation, as high school graduation was then called. He followed the custom of many young graduates in those days and taught elementary school.

After teaching for two years in the Baysville area he spent a year teaching on Pelee Island. We were able to obtain a copy of his contract from the museum archives on Pelee Island. By this time, World War I had been in progress for nearly two years and the British army realized that the war was going to last for some time yet. The war of attrition had decimated the ranks of young officers. James joined the University of Toronto Canadian Officers Training Corps and was immediately drafted by the British army.



First instructors at the newly created Ontario Forest Ranger School: Back Row left to right: Earl Goodman, Aubrey Dunne, Prof. Ted Dwight, Prof. Art Michell; Front Row, left to right: Jim Ruxton, Alvin Dunne, Bill Stinson.



Jim Ruxton teaching at the Ontario Forest Ranger School.

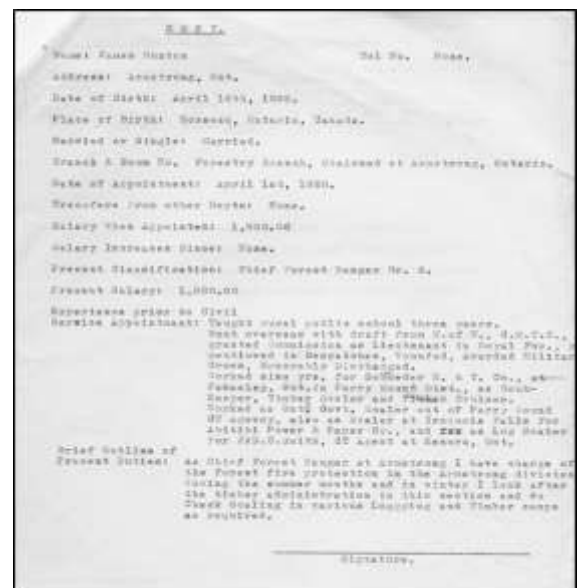


Left to right: three generations of Ruxtons, all named Jim.

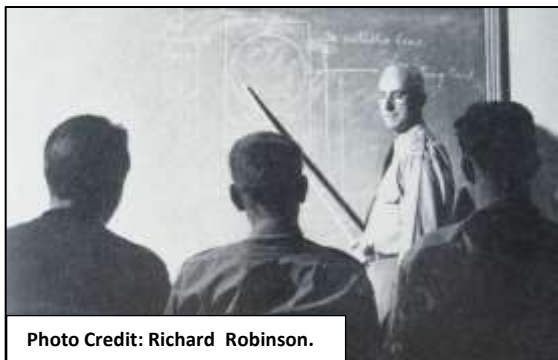
He travelled to England where he entered an officer training program. After a short but very challenging course in Scotland he was assigned to The Royal Fusiliers City of London Regiment. James was in active service for some time. His courage and leadership skills were recognized in a personal letter from Winston Churchill. As well, he was awarded the Military Cross from King George V. In the battle of Amiens, James was seriously wounded. After several months in the hospital he was transferred to The Royal Flying Corps where he became a pilot. He maintained his flying skills for some years while working for the Ontario provincial government. It was always a delight for young pilots to turn the controls over to a pilot who had learned to fly a Tiger Moth.

As James said "It was difficult to keep the boy on the farm after having seen Gai Paris." Like many young men he returned in 1919 to a world where jobs were difficult to find. Schroeder Mills and Timber Company was operating in Pakesley, Ontario, north of Parry Sound, and he found employment there as a clerk. It was not long, however, before he had a scaling license and was doing timber cruising and scaling. Jim worked as a cruiser and scaler for nine years.

The timber limits were exhausted in late 1926. The company began searching for new limits to work, but James was now married and a father, and was looking for something more permanent. On April 1, 1927, he began what turned out to be continuous employment with the Forestry Branch, at Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Later that same year he was made Chief Ranger at Armstrong where he established a forestry service. One of the family's favourite stories of this time is about a woodsman who was found frozen at



the timber camp where he worked. The corpse was brought to town, and because Jim was the closest thing to the law, was responsible for the body until it could be buried.



In 1943, after extensive experience fighting forest fires he became fire protection specialist at Port Arthur. With his experience and leadership abilities being recognized, he was transferred to Parry Sound, where he was assistant district forester from 1944-47. During these three years he studied forestry at the University of Toronto during the university year.

In 1947 he began instructing at the Forest Ranger School. During his years at the school he was involved in planning and course development. He demonstrated a good deal of empathy toward older students in particular who had a lifetime of experience to give to their work and the younger students. He and his wife Clara were a positive influence to the school community. He became Director in 1953, and in 1954 he moved on to become

District Forester in Tweed, Ontario.

After spending most of his life in small communities, James was transferred to Toronto to become supervisor of the Junior Ranger Program in 1956. He worked in this capacity for some years, but eventually returned to Fire Protection Specialist work, both inspecting and teaching. In 1962 he retired to live in Huntsville, Ontario. After many years of retirement he died in 1983.

Readers's Challenge:

I am asking each and every reader to reflect on the questions below and send me an email on at least one item, or, hopefully, more of them. Don't leave it to the next reader – when you finish this issue, please go to your computer and send me an email!

1. What do you like about Forestry?
2. What would you add, change or remove?
3. Name at least one history topic that we should pursue, people, place, thing, event; if you can, provide a name of someone with information or who may be able to write on this topic.
4. Would you be interested in seeing a regular section on organizational histories?
5. I've tried to engage the conservation community, but have had little success – do you have any ideas on how we can get more folks on the conservation side involved.
6. Would you be willing to become involved in the publishing of Forestry issues – finding topics and writers, researching, editing, book reviewing, archive and museum source write ups etc.
7. What part of your forest history do you find most interesting – share it with me.

I will thank you in advance. Please send your email to me at this address: fhsoed@bell.net .

Regards, Sherry

The Archives / Museums Corner

By Sherry Hambly

Author's Note: I interviewed Ashley Young, Curator of the Blind River Timber Village Museum, and Rhea Marcellus, CEO of the Blind River Library for this article. Ashley took time out her busy schedule to describe the museum and Rhea kindly provided me with information on the material and focus that the library has related to local history. Rhea told me she remembers the last log drive on the Mississagi River, which took place in the late 1950s. She also remembers seeing logs that had been lost from booms scattered all over the beach area. I learned about two other interesting websites from Rhea and Ashley called OurOntario and Artefacts Canada, which are described briefly at the end of this article.

North Shore of Lake Huron

The north shore of Lake Huron has a rich forest history related to the harvesting of white pine that populated the forestland north of the shore. In the beginning the logs were cut, river-driven to the shore, then boomed across the lake to Michigan. When Canada implemented a policy that timber had to be cut in Canada, sawmills were built along the north shore and small towns began to spring up to support the mills. Many of the sawmills were owned by Americans. The American influence is evident in the many streets named after American lumbermen. Blind River was one of those towns. It has recognized its forest history and has worked actively to preserve it. Both the Blind River Timber Village Museum and the Blind River Public Library are involved in this preservation work.

Blind River Timber Village Museum

The Blind River Timber Village Museum preserves historical artifacts related to forestry, fishing, mining, transportation and social history. It consists of one main building that contains two galleries housing local historical artifacts including those related to forestry. One gallery has artifacts from the McFadden Sawmill - the largest sawmill east of the Rocky Mountains and the largest white pine sawmill in the world before it closed in 1969. Other forestry related artifacts include equipment used in lumber camps, and over 30 log-stamping hammers. Outside, in addition to a blacksmith's shop, is equipment from the McFadden Mill including a lumber stacker, a lumber carrier and a Beringer brake (or crazy wheel) and a boat that was used to move men to and from lumber camps.



The museum has an active program to digitize its artifacts, and has taken high quality photographs of many of them. The museum also holds over 3,000 photographs, of which approximately 30 per cent are forestry related. About 2200 of these photographs have been catalogued. Other written documentation includes newspaper clippings and some local archival material such as blueprints from the mill. The museum also has a copy of a student thesis from Laurentian University on the great fire of 1948.

The museum has created a 45-minute DVD on logging days that contains original footage from a 1955 documentary on logging history in the Blind River area. It includes scenes on logging camps, river drives and the mill. The original video is housed in the National Archives. The DVD is available for sale and is a popular item. The museum also sells a book written by a local author, Karl Kaufman, describing the logging history of the area.

The museum is open year round and receives approximately 4,000 visitors a year. It has a research room that is open by appointment. Fundraisers are held on a regular basis, as are special days to attract visitors and to provide opportunities to educate schoolchildren. A fur trapper reunion is planned for the summer of 2014.

Future plans for the museum include continued work on digitizing the over 500 artifacts (taking high quality photographs of them) and photographs, and to scan and index the collection. The ultimate intent is to make the digital information available through "Artefacts Canada".

The Municipality of Blind River owns and operates the museum. More information on the Blind River Timber Village Museum can be found at this website: <http://www.blindriver.com/site/welcome/index.php?pid=75>.

Library

The library is very interested in local history and has a considerable collection of local historical information. The library focusses on written material, both commercially and self-published, as well as unpublished material. Any photographs they receive are given to the Timber Village Museum. The library has an online catalogue that contains information on history. Typing the words “local history” into the online catalogue provides a listing of published materials. The library has made efforts to collect as much local history as they can. In the 1970s they had summer students index gravestones and obtain oral interviews. The library has a program to index unpublished material, but this project is done primarily through volunteers who read the material and then create the indexing information. Also, the library tries to note in the front of published material the page numbers that relate to local history. Unpublished material contains such items as family histories, which may contain information on local forest history. The library is also linked into *OurOntario*, a website devoted to providing access to “digital collections of libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, community groups, government agencies, and content organizations”.



The library is very interested in helping people do research on local history – both on a drop-in and more formal basis. The library has its own webpage and is open all year round.

Here is a link to the Blind River library website: <http://www.olsn.ca/blindriverlibrary/Index.html>.

Other Museums and Libraries

Other towns along the north shore of Lake Huron share a similar forest history to Blind River including the towns of Massey, Iron Bridge, Thessalon, Bruce Mines and St. Joseph’s Island. These towns all have museums or libraries. However, they are open only in the summer season and I was unable to gather information on their holdings and activities.

Artefacts Canada

Artefacts Canada is a Canadian Government website, with the stated following purpose: “Thanks to the important contribution of this country's heritage institutions, the Artefacts Canada database contains close to 4 million object records and approximately 800,000 images from Canadian museums. This important source of information is made available to museum professionals and the public.” Searches can be made on keywords and by province. The Blind River Timber Village Museum has uploaded photographs of their log stamping hammers. The website can be accessed here: <http://www.pro.rcip-chin.gc.ca/artefact/index-eng.jsp>.

OurOntario

The purpose of OurOntario as taken from their website: “The *OurOntario.ca* is a unique partnership with cultural and heritage organizations of all shapes and sizes, designed to make our digital content discoverable to a global audience. OurOntario.ca is a service of [OurDigitalWorld](#), a not-for-profit organization that offers programs and services addressing the information and learning needs of Ontarians in the digital environment.

The website can be accessed here: <http://www.ourontario.ca/>.

Personal Recollections

Recollections of Building Fire Towers

By Lloyd Woods (as told to his son, Doug Woods, in 2003)

Preamble that was provided with the article:

'In December 2003, Doug Woods (Hearst District Area Supervisor) asked his father Lloyd, a former Chief Ranger and Deputy Chief Ranger, to recount his stories and memories from working on the MNR Fire Towers. At the time, Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources was looking for historical information, and Lloyd, known as "L.G." (which he often said stood for 'lookin' good!'), was one of the experts, having always worked in the Fire Program, even after retirement during escalated fire situations. He was also a Service Boss on a Provincial Fire Team for many, many years. Lloyd's other son, Wes Woods, works for the MNR as the Fire Management Supervisor in Chapleau. Obviously fire runs in the family!

Doug Woods scanned in pictures from his collection and his father provided a narrative to the photos. The document attached is the original transcript of his narrative. While some minor edits have been made for editorial purposes, most of what you see is original, and therefore you may find the version a bit choppy. But, the result is an original, incredibly interesting and sometimes funny history of those long-forgotten towers, and the people that helped build, live in and maintain them. Lloyd Woods passed away on January 8th, 2009, after living life to its fullest for 78 years."

Editor's Note: The original copy has been further edited for publication in Forestory.

Lloyd Woods was the Chief Ranger for Hearst District (1968-1974) and Deputy Chief Ranger for Chapleau District (1955-1968). The area where these photos were taken was known as the "Kapuskasing District and the Hearst Division" and included Hornepayne (about 90 miles SW of Hearst). In the change to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) in 1974, Lloyd became the Field Services Supervisor for Hearst District and remained in this position until his retirement in 1988.

Bannerman Fire Tower Cabin (also known as the Fushimi Fire Tower)

This tower was built on Fushimi Lake (which is now a Provincial Park), in Bannerman Township in Hearst District. There is a trail going up to the tower. The tower man was called Neegen. The boats belonged to tower man Neegan (his son, Merl Neegen, also worked for the MNR). The tower is still there, and is within Fushimi Provincial Park boundaries. Peter Bird was also a towerman. Twenty-five miles west of Hearst was the Constance Lake First Nation (also known as Calstock, which is a railway siding). Apparently the members of this First Nation came down from the Hudson Bay area and worked in fire towers and logging camps.

Lloyd participated in building the first road into the provincial park. He believes they must have either flown or boated in to the construction material to construct the original tower cabin. At one time there was a logging operation in the area, which may have provided some of the wood for the cabin.

Bulkow Tower

This tower is located in Bulkow Township within the Chapleau District. The tower was about 1 ¾ miles away from the rail siding. An old tower and new tower were built with the steel being brought in by helicopter. The new tower was built in 1956, 1957, and 1958 to replace the old steel towers. The tower man's cabins were always white and red – the old Lands and Forests colours!

Were the tower men lonely? Some were and some were not. At one time, a young couple lived at the Bulkow tower. They were writing a book and they loved the solitude. It was good blueberry country too. But after a while, it became difficult to get people to stay in there. A number of elderly people or families with small children would do the job too. As the fire hazard went down they would be brought out for two or three days to have a break and get some groceries. A lot of times we

parachuted supplies down to them by cardboard canisters via beaver aircraft or otter aircraft – via a hole cut in the floor – and we dropped them through the trap door based on hand signals from the pilot.

Bulkow Tower Cabin 3



Material to build the tower was brought in by Bell G2 helicopter (the payload of this aircraft wasn't very much in those days so they operated in the early morning and later in the evening when the airlift was the best). Often a large area was cleared to accommodate the helicopter – plus the top of the hill was sparse growth. When we built the new towers the cabins were prefabricated - and the roof was cut into about 8 pieces that were bolted together to make the cupola. All the new towers had a trap door to access the roof to put an aerial on the top and to shingle the roof. The old ones didn't have a trap door. To shingle over the joints one of the tower crew held me by the ankles.

Lloyd was on the roof of the tower one day and waved at a helicopter that went by and they waved back – that's how high the tower was and especially the top of the tower.

Bulkow Tower Cabin

While we were building the Bulkow tower we lived in the tent – there was about four or five of us. If you had good weather you could put up a tower in about 5 days. The foundation was cement so you had to wait for that to dry. A pulley and gin pole (a dry spruce pole about 10-12' and about 3' to 1 ½ "in diameter) with 200 feet of rope was used to pull up the steel sections, tower cubicle and roof. We often had to improvise as we went. Despite the fact that there was no safety gear there were no accidents.



Fire Camp at Barclay Bay on Missinaibi Lake (now a Provincial Park)



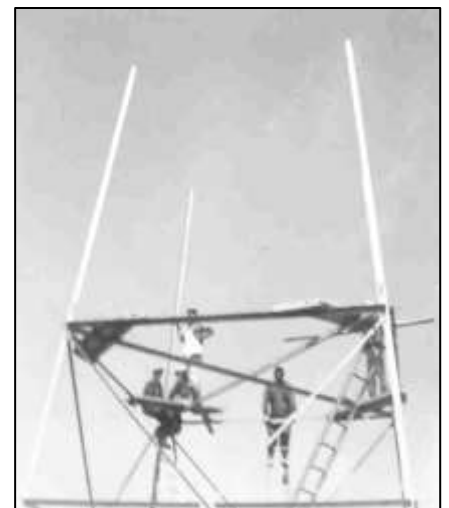
A fire started June 2, 1955, in Missinaibi, about 50 miles west of Chapleau. We got a smoke report from Bulkow Tower and reported it to Chapleau. This fire was reported out on September 12 after 69,999 acres. A helicopter went down there during the fire. It was eventually found in the fall, between a logging road and the lake. At the time of the fire there was no road into this area.

Fire Tower 2

We built the tower in sections and left the bolts loose. If the bolts were too tight on the first section it was very hard to line up the next section; so by keeping them loose until they could be lined up and then tightened. Platforms were something that were improvised and then the ladder was put on later, before workers would shinny up the pole to the next level.

Work couldn't be done in the wind or rain because it was too dangerous. The majority of the time the towers were put together in the morning and the evening, unless it was nice in the daytime and then work could be done then too. The weather had a bearing

~ 40 ~



on how long it took to build the tower. We'd try to start in the spring but we'd get pulled away to fight a fire. The bugs were bad until you got higher up so building in June there were lots of bugs. Sometimes we were building as late as September.

Fire Tower 4



This tower was road accessible and we were able to take in a cement mixer that we used for the piers –the cement posts in the bedrock. (In more isolated sites we used the J5s –small Bombardier tractor – tracked vehicle. They were good to take in things to towers. They were used lots on fires to transport pumps and hose, and the tree planters would use them. There are bigger versions of them still around. Hydro uses them to drive up and down the hydro line for their spray program.)



Fire tower 3: Gin pole to the right of the main support pole.

On more isolated sites we would fly the cement mixer in by chopper along with hose bags filled with cement and bags of gravel; and we'd dump them out and go back and get some more so we had enough to build four piers and a cement step underneath the ladder.

Water was often a problem. The tower man would haul it from "down below" if there was a creek, but we'd often haul it in cans. Tower men were smart though – they would catch the rainwater from the cabins for washing etc.

Mostly the towers were built on bedrock. So when the cement piers were you had to bore holes in the rocks about 12", 14" or 16" for bolting in the support wires. The holes had to be done by hand with a hand bore with a carbide bit. One man would hold the bit and another would hit with a sledgehammer, and then the other would turn and hit etc. The piers were always tapered. The bottom of the pier might be two feet by two feet, tapering to 18" at the top. This design helped combat frost heave. Usually, there was always a set of plans that went with the steel and they would give you the basics. We followed the plans. The steel was ordered through regional office – the steel came from Hamilton steel plants.

We needed new towers, as there was a blind spot where we were not getting smoke reports because the other towers couldn't see this area. Ernie Morin, Chief Ranger, and I surveyed the area in the winter, and came up with a location to build a tower to uncover the blind spot.

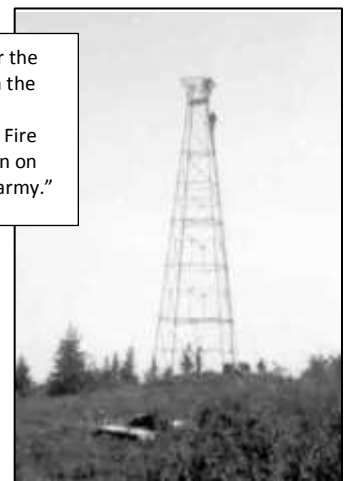
Fire Tower 10 – Lackner Tower



This tower is located in Lackner Township in Chapleau District. The tower was road accessible by old bush road by jeep. The Tower man was Clarence Iserhoff. He was there in 1958. The tower was built about 1957.

Fire Tower 5 – Fire River Tower

This tower is almost completed – it is ready for the cupola. This tower is accessible by rail only via the CN rail siding called Fire River (about 60 miles southwest of Hearst). The tower is east of the Fire River Siding. The tower man left a note written on the wall saying "I've quit and gone to join the army."



Fushimi Tower (otherwise known as Bannerman Tower)



This tower was on a height of land between two lakes. It was called Bannerman tower because it was located in Bannerman Township. It was also known as the Fushimi tower as Fushimi Lake is to the South of the tower, and the tower man's cabin was on Fushimi Lake. The tower in this picture was built in the 1950s using the old style steel.

Lackner Tower



The photo to the left shows the type of cabin that was put on top of the towers – the newer ones were 8' x 8'. This type of cubicle was bigger than the older, octagon ones. I found that the square floor had a lot more room. Maybe the older octagonal ones were done for ease of building.

We'd hoist the cabin up by the gin pole and slide it over onto the platform. The person on the ladder was Lawless Cecile, Chief Ranger in Chapleau. He came out to see how we were making out.

Old Tower behind New Tower (Bulkow Tower)

The photo to the right shows an old and new tower. We were building new towers because the old towers were unsafe. The supports in the old towers were supported by twisted wire. The new towers had steel supports and were 10 feet taller. All of the new towers that were built were done so to replace old towers, except the two new ones to fix blind spots.



The height of the cement piers depended on the slope of the land. Some were 12" and some up to 3 feet. The plans established how far apart the piers were to be. Each pier was raised or lowered to meet the level. Once the base was set up then the rest of the tower went up on the level.

At the beginning we had to learn from trial and error – sometimes we had to dismantle a tower and reassemble it if it wasn't lining up (i.e., cross supports on the tower needed to be crossed and bolted a certain way or the next section wouldn't line up properly).

The steel would all come by rail from the manufacturer. The rail was long – the longest piece could be 16'. The steel was all pre-cut, and all the bolts and screws were included. The only thing we had to do was the floor. The cubicle was done by a local carpenter. There might have been a basic plan for the cubicles but I don't remember seeing the plans.

Lackner Tower (July 7, 1960)



The photo to the left shows a crew in midst of putting up a second prospector tent in preparation to build the Lackner Tower. The trucks were Lands and Forest Jeeps (1956). The white triangles on the roof marked them from the air as Lands and Forests –fire trucks. The jeeps were dark blue. The man standing by the tent looking up was the cook – John (Jokey) White. His son Robin later worked with the MNR.

You can see jerry cans beside the tent containing gas for the jeeps. The round canister contains supplies. These canisters were dropped from an aircraft using a cardboard parachute. The long pole is the ridge pole, and the others are support poles.



Tower Crew2 – Lackner Tower – Ground View (July 7, 1960)

The photo on the right shows the crew that built the Lackner tower. The crew is wearing running shoes. They were the best things for working on steel – they were light and you could move around easily. We had special, written permission from Toronto to wear running shoes instead of steel-toed boots because the traction was far superior while working on steel, and therefore a lot safer.

Crew, leaning against a Ranger Jeep (1956) 749-56, from left to right: White hard hat, Bob Gowalkie, Tim Cecile – visiting, Mike Cecile – sitting up behind, Arthur McAuley (Puxie) – plaid shirt standing (ground man - he was on the ground pulling the rope; sometimes we used the jeep to pull things up), Rodney McAuley (Butch) – Arthur's brother – just came up, not part of crew, Larry Elfson, (Lawless) Cecile – Chief Ranger, Lloyd Woods – Deputy Chief.

Tower Crew – Manning Tower (Manning Township, Chapleau District, 1956)

After the Manning tower was built, the tower man built a still to make alcohol. The tower wasn't too far from a logging company. The story is that the Barn boss from the logging company must have had an argument with the tower man. One morning at 5 a.m. a bang came on the tower man's door and he was met by five Mounties. They were all full of sweat and fly bites. They smashed the still. The tower man had to go to court and pay a fine of \$200.00. This caper was called "The Big Raid".



Left to right: Bobbie Gowalkie, John Henderson, Lloyd Woods. We're leaning against a gin pole near the top of the tower. Photo might have been by Arthur McAuley.

Memories of Spring Camp at “Dorset”

By Sherry Hambly

Author's Note: I tried to cajole a fellow student to write this article, but he told me he couldn't remember the event (I said he should change his name to Pinocchio). Later he told me that he used to tell this story to his kids when they were young.

The Beaver Dam Caper

The highlight of the school year for me was always the spring sessions we attended at the Ontario Forest Ranger School or "Dorset" as we called it. After eight months in dreary classrooms, listening to dreary lectures, in a dreary wintery city, it was wonderful to get out into the fresh air of the forests. Nothing can beat a beautiful sunny, warm day in the woods during springtime, when the trees are beginning to bud and the spring flowers are starting to burst out. Occasionally we would get lucky and there would be enough wind for us to hear the pine trees sighing their mournful existence, a sound that always makes me sad and happy at the same time.

University of Toronto forestry students went to Dorset each spring for years one to three of their education. The sessions were a month in length, and most students stayed at the site for the duration. Even though we were busy each day with various activities, the evenings could be long. Students found various ways to combat the boredom and fill in our free time. Some went fishing, some went into town to pick up contraband, some created havoc in the "snake pit" with shaving cream fights, some put professor's cars up on blocks. But the most notorious event happened one spring when a group of students discovered a beaver dam on one of our field trips up the road from the centre.

After the evening meal, on a balmy spring evening, it was decided that it would be fun to go to the beaver dam and dismantle it. Whatever were we thinking, I do not know as I look back on that event. But about twenty of us piled into various vehicles and motored up to the site. The beaver dam was located to the north of the road, which took a dip just where the dam was. Some cars parked on the west side and some on the east side of this dip. Then the fun started - I must note at this point that there were doers and watchers, but as they say in the law courts, watchers are just as responsible as doers.

Soon the logs were flying, with whoops of joy accompanying each throw. It was great fun, or so it seemed. Then all of a sudden the dam broke and water came pouring over the road and down the hill. In a flash the dam was gone as was a hundred feet of road. The fun was over. Those who had parked on the east side had to leave their cars there and hitch a ride back to the school. It was a subdued bunch who landed back at Lake St. Nora.

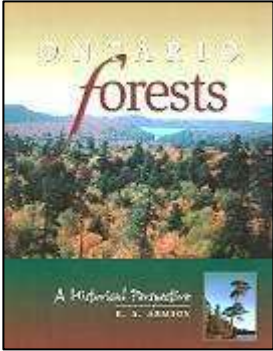
The next morning we were all summoned into the auditorium, where a Conservation Officer lectured us in a very agitated manner over a two hour period, on our unlawful, and ecologically bad, behaviour, waving his gun on occasion to emphasize his point. The outcome was a chastened group, which had to bear the penalty of rebuilding the road - \$20.00 for a doer, and \$10.00 for a watcher. If nothing else, it was a great lesson in law and ecology that we have all carried with us over time.

Books / Articles / Web Sites or Other Resources

Book Review

By Sherry Hambly

Armson, K.A. 2001. Ontario Forests: A Historical Perspective. Markham, Fitzhenry and Whiteside; Toronto, The Ontario Forestry Association. 232 pp.



What better person than Ken Armson to write a book on the forest history of Ontario. Ken had over 50 years of forestry experience behind him when this book was published in 2001. His early career focussed on academia in the fields of soils and ecology. As his career progressed Ken became increasingly involved in policy development and implementation, and he spent several years in government involved in both. Throughout his career Ken has worked with forest industry, government and other groups on technical and policy issues. His broad and in-depth experience is evident in this book. It is jam-packed with information, yet, very readable.

The first half of the book focuses on the glacial, physiological, climatic influences that created the soils upon which our forests developed. These early chapters are followed by chapters on the ecological history of our forests from ice-age migration to current day changes caused by climate change, as well as influencing factors of weather events, insects and disease. The last half of the book covers the interaction and effect of human habitation and development on forest ecology and forest management and its future, from pre-settlement times to a look into the future.

The sections on human influences include Waters and Wars (1650-1850); Lumber, Newsprint and the Beginnings of Conservation (1851-1920); Forestry Begins then Stalls (1921-1950); Forestry Regenerated (1951-1980); Forests and Urban Society - Forestry's Challenge (1981-2000). He ends his book with a chapter on Changing Values and Future Forests. Throughout these chapters there is insight into the economic, political and cultural influences that shaped our forests use and management.

Tables and figures are interspersed throughout the book and add visual context to the book's contents. Tree species silhouettes and information on significant trees are placed on page margins. The book contains a glossary and a list of scientific and common names of tree species. The list of references contains key documents that influenced or describe Ontario's forest history and provides an excellent starting point for gaining further knowledge on this most interesting topic.

Monte Hummel, at the time President of the World Wildlife Fund, contributed the Preface, and foresters Bob Staley and Bill Smith each provided a prologue on forestry in southern and northern Ontario respectively.

Ken wrote this book from his perspective as a practicing forester, who firmly believes that forests perform best and serve our needs best when managed actively and appropriately to sustain them for future use.

For the reader who is looking for one book to provide an expansive and authoritative overview of Ontario's forest history - this should be first on the list.

Dubreuilville

Commuto, Michael, " 'A sparkling example of what aggressiveness, imagination, and skill can accomplish': The Rise of Dubreuil Brothers Limited, 1948-1973," *Ontario History* CV, No. 2 (Autumn 2013): 212-230.



This article is available online in *Ontario History* to members of the Ontario Historical Society:
http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/en/Ontario-History_132 .

Ontario History is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that is published bi-annually by The Ontario Historical Society.

A Short History of the Hearst and Area Sawmills



This website is sponsored by the Hearst Public Library and contains short histories of local sawmills.

From the website:

"Since the end of the Second World War, the town of Hearst and its surroundings have gradually become a leader in the lumber industry, both in Ontario and in Canada.

Unlike many northern communities, which owe their development to the establishment of large, often American paper mills or mining companies, the Hearst region's industry was driven by small, mostly French-Canadian entrepreneurs. These lumbermen established their sawmills and factories and watched them grow over the years, while at the same time ensuring the community's growth and prosperity."

The site provides details on the histories of five main families involved in developing Hearst's sawmilling industry, along with key dates and events. The website is accessible here:

<http://www.scierieshearst.com/indexEn.html>

"Walter Plonski – Forester of Two Continents"



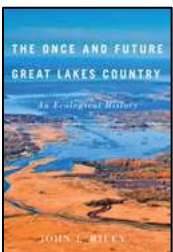
"Władysław Płoński – gospodarz leśny dwóch kontynentów" by Skibniewski, Andrzej, In "Kresowianie na Swiecie", Published by Instytut Slaski, Opole, Poland, 2013

The book *Kresowianie na Swiecie* describes several successful people who were born and raised in Kresy, Poland, one of whom was Walter Plonski. Plonski immigrated from Kresy to Ontario where he worked as a forester for the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. Plonski's nephew, Andrzej Skibniewski, contributed the material on his uncle in this book. Plonski was responsible for developing growth and yield tables for Ontario in the 1950s, which were used for decades as the basis for most wood supply calculations and growth

projections. The title of the section on Plonski is translated as "Walter Plonski – Forester of Two Continents". The book is described in greater detail here: <http://poloniakresy.wordpress.com/2013/09/13/nowa-publikacja-towarzystwa-polonia-kresy/> .

"The Once and Future Great Lakes Country – An Ecological History" by John Riley

Published by McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013, p.488 + illus.



A new publication of interest to members:

The book is divided into two parts: Part One – The Land and What Happened to It, is very much a history of the human impacts since the retreat of the last ice age some 18,000 years ago. Part Two, Voices of Nature Past, focuses on the effects on wildlife and clearing the forests; invasives, growing urbanization and the restoring of the native landscape. John is a member of the Forest History Society of Ontario and was a founding director.

More information on this book can be found here:

<http://www.mqup.ca/once-and-future-great-lakes-country--the-products-9780773541771.php> .

Forest Cover Change from Landsat Imagery

A new interactive tool in Google Earth, developed by the University of Maryland, shows forest cover change across the earth over the past ten years. The tool can be accessed here:

<http://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest> .

Oldest Oak in Bruce County



Guy Depatie has discovered what might be the oldest oak on his property in Bruce County. Depatie believes that this tree is over 250 years old, and has named it Orville. From an article in the Owen Sound Sun Times:

<http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/2012/04/25/meet-orville>

Photo by Troy Patterson/Kincardine News file.

Forestry Chronicle Old Growth Articles

Canada's Forest History Societies

As part of their "Old Growth" series, the Forestry Chronicle published an article on the forest history societies of the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec in their fall issue. The title of the article is:

Launchbury, Rebecca. 2013. "Canada's Forest History Societies." *The Forestry Chronicle* 2013 89(05): 584-586.

The article can be accessed here:

http://cif-ifc.org/uploads/Website_Assets/Sept:Oct_2012.pdf

Articles on Simcoe County Forests

by Dave Dawson of the Orillia Packet and Times

Recently, Dave Dawson, Reporter for the Orillia Packet and Times, interviewed Doug Drysdale and Ken Armson on the state of the forests of Simcoe County. Dawson produced three articles for the Packet and Times, which are currently available online – see below:

"Forests in Jeopardy"

<http://www.orilliapacket.com/2013/10/02/forests-in-jeopardy> (October 2, 2013)

"Forestry is in Trouble at Every Level"

<http://www.orilliapacket.com/2013/10/03/forestry-is-in-trouble-at-every-level> (October 3, 2013)

"Education at Root of Solution"

<http://www.orilliapacket.com/2013/10/04/education-at-root-of-solutionexperts> (October 4, 2013)

In response to the above articles, "the Huronia Woodland Owners' Association (HWOA) has decided to spearhead an educational plan aimed at teaching area students about the values inherent in the region's forests." This article is available here:

"An Education on Forestry"

<http://www.orilliapacket.com/2013/10/23/an-education-on-forestry> (October 23, 2013)

“Renewing Nature’s Wealth”

(Lambert, Richard S. with Paul Pross. Toronto: The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. 1967). The book cover describes this book as “the exciting story of Ontario’s natural resources, and John Robarts, in his Foreword to the book as ‘much more than a history of one of the Departments of the Government of the Province of Ontario: it is a vital component of the history of Ontario’, reaching back nearly 200 years to the days of the first surveyor General of Upper Canada in 1794. The book describes the impact made by a civilized people upon the primitive forest that originally covered the land, and the development of its natural resources under public administration from an early state of confusion and waste down to the modern era of conservation and scientific management.” We will provide a précis of one chapter of this book in each edition of the journal.

Part II: Consolidation and Conservation, 1842-1900 - Chapter 8 (The Golden Age of Timber Exploitation): The government understood that the forest wealth of the country was its greatest asset. The timber industry was a very important source of revenue and the government viewed its role as maximizing revenue from its exploitation. This role conflicted with industry’s aim to maximize its profit, and the two sides were either at loggerheads or on an uneasy truce for this period of time. They eventually realized they had to work together.

The second half of the 19th century brought more stability to the timber industry in Ontario. The amalgamation of the two Canadas and the defeat of the Family Compact gave more power to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly initiated a full-scale enquiry into the state of the industry in 1849, which led to the enactment of the *Act for the Sale and Better Management of Timber upon the Public Lands*. This Act provided the basic structure and considerable stability for timber management over the second half of the century. This legislation was enabling, which allowed regulatory changes to be made administratively. The purpose of the legislation was to 1) ensure maximum revenue to the Crown, 2) to make regulations uniform and consistent, 3) to arbitrate between differences in the industry (trespass etc.). The act eventually led to a reduction in the corruption that was rampant in the timber industry and an improvement in the laxness of licencing and revenue collection, as well as a reduction in the violence in the woods caused by trespass.

The government required a minimum cut on all lands licenced for timber harvest, which often led to severe overproduction. Lumbermen recommended a change to a land rent system, which was eventually adopted. As long as a timber company complied with the regulations and paid its dues, it was virtually guaranteed a perpetual lease. The government also introduced an auction system, but this led to speculation. In 1887 the government raised ground rents. Lumbermen were upset with this increase in costs. This led to the creation of the Lumbermen’s Association of Ontario, which eventually became a strong lobby group.

The timber act of 1849 led to the consolidation of licencing in the Woods and Forest Branch, separating land management from timber management. This led to the creation of an expanded field organization. Revenue collection was moved to banks, not agents. Wood measurement was consolidated to the central shipping point in Quebec. Ten “Timber Agencies” were recommended but only six were implemented. Along with Timber Agents, Wood Rangers were implemented. Although the idea of an expanded field organization was sound, the implementation was not as areas were too large to manage properly, and there were complaints of main office not supporting field agents. Industry continued to try to evade regulations by cutting without licences, trespassing, passing off Crown wood as private land wood and falsifying records. Settlers and Squatters posed problems for both government and industry by starting fires, trespass cutting or refusing to allow industry to cut timber. A lot of timber was floated across the Great Lakes from Georgian Bay illegally.

Market conditions caused problems in the industry. There were severe depressions in the market in the ‘40s, 70s and 80s. Policies of other countries caused issues – Britain removed the differential duty on colonial timber; the United States implemented the Dingley Tariff that imposed tariffs on sawn lumber entering the country. The Dingley Tariff included a retaliatory clause if Canada tried to fight back. The exploitation of Ontario’s forest resource resulted in movement of the industry from the Ottawa Valley to Parry Sound/Muskoka, onto the North Shore of Lake Huron and finally to the Thunder Bay and Rainy River regions. The movement westward was also driven by the westward expansion of the railroads and settler immigration.

The United States market was a huge influence on the Ontario timber industry bringing large amounts of capital. US companies controlled 1,750,000,000 feet of standing timber on Georgian Bay at one point. The demand for lumber led to the building of huge sawmills. J.R. Booth owned a sawmill that produced 125 million board feet of lumber a year.

By the end of the century, government and public sentiment towards forest management began to change. Governments were coming to the realization that their role was to act as a trustee of a vast public resource not just as allocator of licences and arbiter of disputes. And a conservation movement was beginning to develop.

Events and News

Past Events

Drysdale Family Donates Land to York Region

The Drysdale Family of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has donated 55 ha of their land to York Region. From the York Region news release: "The property has been owned and managed by the Drysdale family for the past 62 years and the family is recognized world-wide for their commitment to the environment, sustainable forestry practices and advancement of forest science and management. To acknowledge the family's generous donation and to recognize their contribution to ecological well-being, these lands will carry the Drysdale family name." The full news release can be found here:

<http://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/newsroom/mediarelease/yorkregionalforestgrowsby55hectaresinthetownofwhitchurchstouffville/>.

Doug Drysdale provided more information on the land being donated:

"York Region is acquiring the bulk of our 145 acre (59 ha) tree farm, which has been in our family since 1951, to add it to their forest system. We are making an Eco gift of 20% of the value. The woodlot on this property was the first tree farm in Ontario certified by the Canadian Forestry Association in 1951 and was also certified by the Ontario Forestry Association at the same time. My dad, Reg Drysdale, was a pioneer in the Ontario Christmas Tree industry and was inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1997 for his contributions to that industry. We are proud that we have been asked to provide the Governor General's Christmas tree eight times over the years and that we were twice named the Champion Christmas tree grower in Canada. This farm has been a popular Choose and Cut location since the 1960's. It is strategically located next to York Region's Headquarters where they are building a new Outdoor Education Centre, and it is anticipated that our property will be heavily used. The Oak Ridges Moraine trail will likely go through our place."



Jim McCready Receives "True Professionals of Arboriculture" Award

Jim McCready of Carleton Place recently received the "True Professionals" award sponsored by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Jim received this award for his volunteer efforts as the town arborist for Carleton Place. Jim worked for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for many years and after his retirement he started his own consulting business. Jim is a Registered Professional Forester, a Managed Forest Plan Approver & a Certified Arborist specializing in forest management planning and urban forestry (the last sentence is from his website profile). More information on Jim and the award can be found on the ISA website at:

http://www.isa-arbor.com/events/resources/events_Awards_2013TP_bios.pdf.

There is also material on Youtube about Jim and the award:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXUNRDyut54&list=PLj9UOPSf3EK69qnIS35sH0mZ4aWR_N-0_&index=4.

Gogama Heritage Museum



The official opening for the Gogama museum was held on October 9, 2013. The FHSO was invited to attend, but we were not able to oblige. Gogama has considerable forest history associated with it and we look forward to future materials from this organization. The museum has a web page that can be accessed here:

<http://www.gogama.ca/museum.html>

Maple Leaf Forever Tree



The silver maple tree that inspired Alexander Muir to write the Maple Leaf Forever song was damaged beyond salvage this past summer in a vicious storm that knocked it over. The tree is over 150 years old and was located in Leslieville in Toronto near where Muir lived and worked. According to various news reports in the Toronto Star, the City of Toronto salvaged the wood and intend to repurpose it in a variety of ways. Apparently offspring of this tree live on elsewhere and there is a plan in the works to commemorate the tree through art projects.



Photo credit: Obtained from the Huffington Post website; Steve Russell, Toronto Star.

One story of the tree's demise can be found on the Toronto Star website. Other stories are available through this website by using the search function.

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/07/19/tree_tied_to_canadian_history_tumbles_in_toronto.html.

The website, Toronto's Historical Plaques, contains more information on, and photos of, this tree.

http://www.torontoplaques.com/Pages/Alexander_Muir.html



John McPherson, The House of A. Muir after a Shower in Toronto, 1907. Presumably, this is the tree that inspired the song "The Maple Leaf Forever".

Ontario Urban Forestry Council Celebrates 50 Years and Jack Radecki

The Ontario Urban Forestry Council held a gala evening at the Intercontinental Hotel on November 22, 2013, to celebrate 50 years of conservation, action and advocacy of urban forests. The evening also honoured Jack Radecki, retiring Executive Director, who has worked tirelessly for the organization for many years.

Rebirth Project, Report Number 4

By John Hazlitt

Sherry Hambly, Editor of Forestry, visited the Rebirth site in August with this writer and friends. We identified the plant white lettuce or snake root. This was a new discovery, although not rare. To mark the occasion of the visit we requested that Sherry plant a white pine (*Pinus strobus*) on behalf of the Forest History Society of Ontario, next to the Tree Canada sign.



Canada Trust TD Bank donated a very substantial amount of funding for native shrubs grown by Todd Baker Nurseries of Bayfield, Ontario. The shrubs were planted on September 22, 2013, by 83 bank employees and friends.

The pathways and groves have all been GPS'd and documented by Nick Courtney GPS Specialist, County of Huron. The total length of all pathways is 2195 m measured by John Hazlitt.

On Wednesday, October 23, 35 community forest managers from southern Ontario took time from their busy schedule to visit the site with Dave Pullen, County of Huron Forester. John Hazlitt was the guide. This visit, along with photographs, was documented in the xxx and can be read here: <http://www.rediscovergoderich.com/posts/19-behind-maitland-cemetery-the-groves>. This article describes the site and the work that has been done and contains a map of the trails, along with several photographs.

This update is the last one for the Rebirth series. For readers, you are welcome anytime to drive through Goderich-Maitland cemetery and walk the area. I am prepared to be your guide (contact me at marjoh@cabletv.on.ca). Thank you all for your interest in our project.



Angus Tree Seed Plant Anniversary



From an Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources News Release on October 22, 2013: The Ontario Tree Seed Plant at Angus is celebrating 90 years of preserving biodiversity, protecting the environment and supporting the forest products and wood manufacturing sectors. The facility uses innovative technology to extract, clean, test, and store billions of seeds each year that support the growth of trees in Ontario forests, woodlots, parks, schoolyards, and even your own back yard.



Through 90 years of experience, Ontario's Tree Seed Plant is recognized as a world leader in tree seed collection. The facility supplies seed from 50 native trees to nursery operations, forestry companies and the public. By supporting tree planting, the facility helps Ontario adapt to the effects of climate change, restores endangered tree species and supports tens of thousands of jobs in the forest industry. Planting trees and protecting the environment enhances the quality of life for Ontario families and ensures a dynamic, green economy for future generations. This is part of the government's plan to invest in people, invest in infrastructure and support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

The full news release can be found here:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mnr/en/2013/10/ontario-tree-seed-plant-celebrates-90-years-of-growth.html>

This website contains more information on the seed plant:

http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Forests/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02_166052.html

Future Events

Forest History Society of Ontario Annual General Meeting



Don't forget the Society's Annual General Meeting, held in conjunction with the Ontario Forestry Association's Annual Conference. See you there!

Date: February 20, 2014

Place: Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston

Guest Speaker: Peter Hynard – Forest Managers and Forest History

About the Authors

Austin Cronk and Loretta (Ruxton) Cronk: Loretta and Austin are the daughter and son-in-law of James Ruxton.

Clayton Self: Gained a keen interest in exploring the backcountry after spending summers at his family's cottage.

Gordon Howse PhD: Retired from the Great Lakes Forestry Centre where he had an illustrious 35 year plus career in forest entomology.

Harold Atwood PhD, DSc, FRSC: Professor Emeritus, Neurobiology, University Toronto and son of Dr. Carl E. Atwood.

James A. Baker PhD: A graduate of the Ontario Forest Ranger School who continued on to gain his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Guelph. Jim has worked as a Forest Insect and Disease Ranger for the Canadian Forest Service and with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for 28 years in various capacities in Fish and Wildlife, Forests, and Science Information and Research Development Branches.

John Bacher PhD: Historian and environmentalist from St. Catharines, Ontario; author of *Two Billion Trees and Counting: The Legacy of Edmund Zavitz*.

John Haegeman: Woodworker and avid collector of local logging history in and around the Espanola area.

Sherry Hambly: Retired manager, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

John Hazlitt: Grew up in the Village of Benmiller where Sharpe's Creek and the Valley of the Lower Maitland River became his playground and later his workplace.

Ken C. Veitch: Retired Municipal Clerk-Administrator for the Town of Bracebridge; provides historical research services, and writes on the history of Bracebridge and surrounding areas.

Lisa Harrison: Freelance and corporate writer, now based in Haliburton County, with a keen interest in the Ontario Forest Ranger School/Frost Centre.

Lloyd Woods: Worked in the Fire Program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for many years.

Margaret Carruthers RPF: District Environmental Assessment Forester, Sault Ste Marie District, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Michael Rosen RPF: Executive Director, Tree Canada and Director, Forest History Society of Ontario.

Mike Commito: PhD student in Environmental History at McMaster University.

Richard Keeso: Owner/Operator, J.H. Keeso and Sons Sawmill.

Ted Turner: A local historian in the Goderich area with an interest in vanished communities.

Wilson (Will) Samis: A graduate of the 1967 class who worked for 30 years for The Department of Lands and Forests and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, retiring in 1997 as Area Biologist in the Blind River Office. He lives and farms with his wife Elaine in the Penocean Hills near Iron Bridge, Ontario.

Sylva Recap

The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests published for many years a journal called "*Sylva*". The purpose of this journal was to highlight changes in policy, individuals and the comings and goings of staff. *Sylva* contains nuggets of forest history that will be selected for each edition of the journal. Several articles on forest resources inventory were published in *Sylva*. The one below provides a general overview of the program to 1954.

School-Bells Ring Out for Rangers (*Sylva* Vol. 1(1) (:33-36) 1945

By P. McEwen

We want to make clear, right off, to our Western-minded readers that the subject of this article has nothing to do with "The Lone Ranger" and his pals, since the closest most Ontario Forest Rangers will ever come to a broncho will be in hollering, "Hi, ho, Silver!" Most of our Forest Rangers will have their lives too hemmed around with trees to see very much of the prairies.

The newly established Forest Ranger School near Dorset is the first in Ontario Forestry's history. Established by our Department in cooperation with the University of Toronto, it will serve a multiple purpose. First, it will provide a course of studies for the rehabilitation of men from the Armed Forces who desire to enter forestry as a career. Beyond that, the school will provide practical field experience for undergraduate students in the University's faculty of forestry and will give "refresher" courses in forest administration to present members of the Department's staff. The school is also scheduled to serve as a research station.

What are the courses to be taught at this "bush school"? Well, the final itinerary has yet to be settled upon, but a committee composed of eleven men is now being chosen to decide upon the exact shape and length of the studies to be provided. On this committee will be members of the Department, members of the University, representatives from the Department of Education, and members from the pulp and paper and lumber industries as well as related commercial organizations.

It can be said now, however, that the emphasis throughout the courses will be upon practical field matters. There will be lessons in silviculture and forest management, in bush communications, in estimating and forest surveying, in mapping and tree identification. In fact, the scholars will be studying "forestry in the field," with a minimum of pure theory. The length of the major courses now planned will be twelve months, spread over a period of two years, six months to the year.

Being a co-operative project, responsibility in the new school is divided between the Department and the University of Toronto. The courses, themselves, will be under the direction of the University while the Department has underwritten the expense of building construction and payment of the teaching staff's salaries. The University, for its part, also bears the expense of research and technical equipment.

Since the eventual school courses have yet to be plotted out by the committee, the studies in their initial stages at the Ranger School will be based upon the present annual one-month courses in Scaling and Forestry. For the benefit of those who may have forgotten, the contents of this short annual course for foresters is here recounted: Six days are devoted to the intricacies of telephone communications, including line construction, installation, instrument structure and repair, climbing, testing, and locating trouble on the line. Seven days are given to the study of silviculture and forest management, which takes in identification of trees and shrubs, planting, tree and forest life history. To Forest Surveying, six days are now devoted, including level and slope chaining and compass training. Four days are given over to Forest Mapping and Estimating.

Besides the time devoted to actual field instruction, six evening lectures treat of the relative importance of Canada's great forests. These talks, delivered during the one-month course, deal with Canada's position relative to the forests of the world, Canada's forests as a source of wood supply, Canada's forest industries, Canada's forest products in world trade, Canada's forests in their relation to water, soil and climatic conditions, and the importance of Canadian forests for recreation and hunting and fishing.



The studies at the new Ranger School will, naturally be a considerable advance on the present one-month course, but the above outline of that course will indicate the trend which the new "tree college" will take. Also, the enthusiasm which the present short curriculum has aroused and the benefit which it has given to our forester-students bodes well for the new more complex and complete School.

In one physical feature, at least, the Forestry School will differ from other colleges. For a campus, instead of a few hundred yards of green plush lawn, there will be 5,000 acres of rugged bush, containing in its expanse just about every species of tree to be found in this province.

The location of the school in this bush land of northern Haliburton has caused some controversy. Some say it is too far into the "northern backwoods"; others, to the contrary, say it is too near the "over-civilized south," far removed from the real forests of the northland. In some ways, we agree with both. But the present site has many advantages. Since the purpose of the School is to educate, the more people who can readily reach it the better. The central location is thus an advantage. In any event, this is our first Ranger School (Norway has *eight*) and we will have to await the decision of experience.

The buildings of the school, itself, are to include two dormitories. Number One Dormitory Building is now nearing completion and should be ready for occupancy by the time this issue appears. This building is of two stories, roughly L-shaped. The face of the Dormitory structure is 140 feet long by 32 feet wide and the wing is 42 feet by 32 feet. It is lined inside and out with shiplap lumber, covered with asbestos side shingles. Bedrooms and corridors are finished with pine trim.

Each Dormitory Building planned provides living quarters for 76 men. It contains 38 bedrooms, 6 wash, toilet and shower rooms, 2 linen storage rooms, a library and a large common room. Each bed-sitting room is designed to accommodate two men. All furniture, except two chairs, is built-in against the walls and a unit for each man consists of a bed, desk, bookshelves, dresser and wardrobe. All furniture was made in our Sudbury workshop by Reg Lafreniere from red pine cut near Chapleau by Rangers of that Division. This furniture is beautifully constructed throughout, and our thanks and admiration go to Mr. Lafreniere for his fine craftsmanship.

The Common Room deserves special noting. It is a room 25 by 42 feet and goes to the roof. At the second floor level of the 22 feet high room is a railed gallery. A large stone fireplace with stone chimney exposed for the full height of the room is opposite the gallery. Five large windows provide lighting, and all walls are finished in birch plywood broken into attractive L-shaped panels.

The School's Heating and Plumbing Plant will be a building 42 feet by 70 feet overall. The boiler room, in the centre, is 32 feet by 40 feet with a 15-foot ceiling. It is flanked by the fuel room on one side and the pump and equipment room on the other. This building is of reinforced concrete throughout. Three-phase Hydro Electric power has been arranged for and is to be completed by late fall.

Plans for the kitchen and dining hall are now completed. They are to comprise an H-shaped building with the dining hall to seat 150. The kitchen will form the bar of the "H" connecting the dining hall with a wing for refrigeration, stores and bakery. The schedule for this year is to finish Number One Dormitory, erect the Heating Plant, close in the kitchen-dining hall building and complete its inside structure during the winter months.

When all of these relatively minor matters are cleared away, the vital business of instruction will begin. And it is encouraging for us, at this early stage, to note that many of the public recognize the Ranger School Project as the important step we know it to be. For, as the *Hamilton Spectator* has remarked editorially:

"The progress of the experiment will be followed with great public interest, for the scientific conservation and development of the forest resources of the province, and of the nation, is a work of the utmost importance to the welfare of the state."

When Did Ontario First Experience Desertification? A Question by John Bacher.

The problem of desertification in Ontario first had a major impact on public thinking with the publication by the Department of Agriculture in 1908 of the dramatic "wasteland" report of the then Lecturer in Forestry at the Ontario Agricultural College, Edmund Zavitz. Before writing this report, Zavitz in 1903 while still a Botany student at McMaster University, encountered sand deserts in Norfolk County. Zavitz's encountered Norfolk's deserts while accompanied by then Chief Forester of Ontario, Judson Clark on study of the county. This was reported on in 1904 in Judson's Clark only report to the Ontario legislature during his short tenure with the Bureau of Forests. What is now termed "desertification" but during his lifetime described as "blow-sand conditions" by Zavitz, originated much earlier than his quite detailed 1908 report, or Clark's brief observations based on one trip to Norfolk County. However, descriptions of this problem in government reports are quite stretchy before 1904.

Reports by early conservationists such as Robert W. Phipps, Thomas Southworth and Thomas Beall and their collaborative informants, do give a lot of description of negative consequences of deforestation. These tend to stress the problem of stream flashiness, expressed in dried up streams in summer and widespread spring flooding. There is also a lot about stronger blasting winds and their subsequent damage to fruit crops. However, it appears that the reality that much of Ontario had the problem of blow sand but that there was reluctance to talk about it.

The earliest reference I have found to spreading deserts was an essay written in 1883 in response to a competition by the Council of Agricultural and Arts Association. The competition was on the challenge of getting farmers' sons to stay in agriculture. As a result of the challenge 16 essays were received. One essay, which was not rewarded first or second prize, was considered "highly commended by the judges", and was published in the 1884 Ontario Sessional Papers (No. 11). The essay was by Fred C. Wade, from Toronto. Wade's essay appears to be the first description of what Zavitz would later describe as the blow sand problem. Here Wade makes the following observation:

"The preponderance of muscle and some absence of thought in the farming operations of the past have had much to do in partially ruining our Province as an agricultural country. All the energy and knowledge of her farmers for the next hundred years will be required to restore the good part of the old state of things. What havoc would a little knowledge of forestry and the value of timber growths have prevented, had the country have been controlled in accordance therewith. The great forests have been cut away indiscriminately; in many cases the only reward being a rocky or sandy surface, of thousands of acres. Great sand ridges have been laid bare, useless for no other purpose than the growth of wood; forests square miles of feckless and flawless timber have been burned away through carelessness or folly, and all the soil that supported them was charred by the same degree."

Wade's description of sandy surfaces on "thousands of acres" and "Great sand ridges...laid bare" in 1883 is quite similar to what Zavitz deplored in 1908. E.C. Drury, when speaking to an important turning point in Ontario history in 1938 at the founding of the Ontario Conservation and Reforestation Association of Ontario, warned that without afforestation sand dunes would spread and bury much of the province.

It would be of great significance to know if there are any references to such problems before 1883. A verbal source for this problem is Zavitz's account of what his mother Dorothy told him about her life on the Oak Ridges Moraine near Bowmanville in the 1860s, when he was a child in the late 1870s; but there appears to be no written account of the problem. Wade's account of desertification appears to be the only one that was written while George Johnson, forest warden of the Six Nations was still alive (he died on February 14, 1884). He risked his life three times against illegal logging and died as a result of injuries sustained in efforts to enforce forest protection laws. To understand what motivated Johnson, it would be helpful if there were a better understanding of the exact emergence of the blow sand problem in Ontario.

Can you students of forest history find, apart from Zavitz's recollections of what his mother told him circa 1878, an earlier source? If you can, please send your information to John Bacher at pals@becon.org.

Forest History Society of Ontario

Membership Form

Thank You For Your Support!

The mission of the Society is:

“To further the knowledge, understanding and preservation of Ontario’s forest history” and to accomplish this with the following objectives:

1. To preserve forest and forest conservation history;
2. To encourage and further the development and recognition of forest history;
3. To support research and studies of forest history;
4. To support the archival preservation of records and materials relating to forest history, and
5. To promote the better understanding of forest history through public education.



The Society has two ongoing projects, both available on our website:

www.ontarioforesthhistory.ca

The first is a catalogue of publications dealing with all aspects of Ontario's forest history. Members can submit contributions on our website.

The second is the identification and listing of collections and materials relating to Ontario's forest history. The Society works with established archives such as the Archives of Ontario and several university archives to facilitate the preservation of significant collections.

The Society publishes a newsletter, **Forestory**, twice a year – Spring and Fall - containing informative articles on Ontario forest history.

(The FHSO has a privacy policy. Your information will not be shared or sold.)

You can initiate or renew your membership online by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.ontarioforesthhistory.ca/index.php/membership>

Or, by filling out and submitting the form below, with your cheque, to the address listed below:

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