

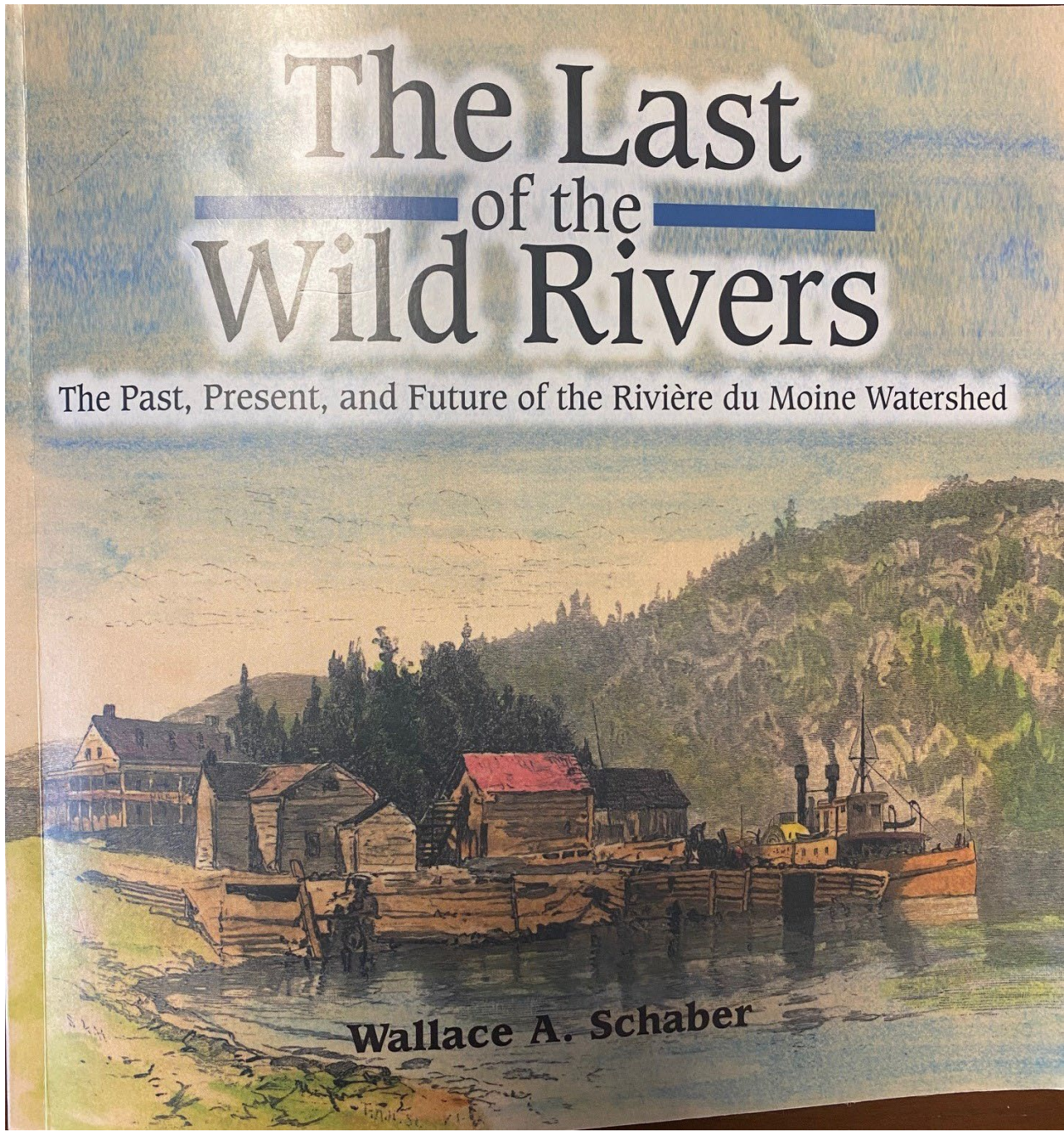
# Batch # 10

**Canoeists AKA Voyageurs**

## The Last of the Wild Rivers

# The Last of the Wild Rivers

The Past, Present, and Future of the Rivière du Moine Watershed



Wallace A. Schaber



## Canoeists A.K.A Voyageurs

In this book written by Wallace A. Schaber “The Last of the Wild Rivers” (see below excerpts taken from this book) which states that the canoeists were Algonquins.

In many of the statements by the Elders of Golden Lake now Pikwakanagan and the people of the Du Moine River Band tell of the Algonquin Canoeists. Thomas Lagarde was one of these Canoeists/Voyageurs, he was of Algonquin/French heritage.



Our family lines were proud river people who lived and worked for many generations around water sheds such as the Ottawa River and the Du Moine River Sheds.

These men worked diligently through weather conditions and persevered the hardships of being Fishermen, Trappers, Canoeists/Voyageurs and Log Drivers.



## Acknowledgments Page I

### — Acknowledgements —

THIS BOOK WAS created in two stages.

Over the past forty-plus years, friends, clients, business acquaintances, and local storytellers have added to my store of Du Moine memories that subconsciously created the motivation to write this book, and I thank you all. My apologies if I have adapted one of your stories to fit into mine without proper credit.

Over the past three years, retirement has allowed me the luxury of devoting considerable time to completing the task. First, I'd like to thank my wife, Louise, for accommodating this distraction and aiding a great deal in editing the final draft. Second, I'd like to thank Phil Jenkins, who very patiently coached me through the process of writing a book.

I'd like to thank Chief Harry St. Denis, Peter Di Gangi, James Morrison, and the Algonquin Nation Secretariat for allowing me access to some of their research and guiding me through the Du Moine/Wolf Lake First Nation history.

Janet Uren was of great assistance, especially for chapters two and three; she believed I had a great story to tell and urged me on. Ron Bowes, Leonard Leclerc, and Myro Mykolyshyn were faithful readers of early drafts and my local guides throughout. Thank you to Dan Charbonneau and Karel Van Duyse for the use of their photos and their sharing of local knowledge. The Du Moine Rod and Gun, Maganasipi, and Bear Lake clubs were very generous with access to their records.

The Library and Archives Canada staff were very helpful, as were the local volunteers at the historical societies of Gatineau, Aylmer, Shawville, Arnprior, and Pembroke.

Thank you to everyone who put up with my interviews and requests for permissions to use their information, especially those who appeared in chapter seven. All levels of government, from Mayor Jim Gibson of Rapides des Joachims to the Regional MRC to Provincial Ministries in Quebec City and to Mathieu Ravignat, the Federal Member for Pontiac, were very open and co-operative.

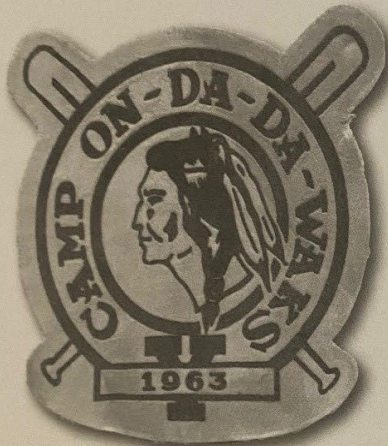
A special thanks to Tim Gordon of Burnstown Publishing House and his team: my very patient editor, Jane Karchmar, and book designer Wendy Clements, for taking on this project.

FINALLY, I APOLOGIZE for any misinterpretation or missing pieces of this puzzle. Had I found these pieces, they might have painted a different picture. I welcome all corrections and additions to this history of the Du Moine watershed.



## Introduction Page IV

through my public school education and that was reflected in the print, movie, and advertising of the sixties and seventies was possibly, like yours, quite skewed from the truth. Today, in 2015, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report* challenged my beliefs in our history. This book is for me a step in the right direction to re-educate myself. Aside from this flaw, my youth camp experience and later business experience have formed the foundation of my life.



**On-Da-Da-Waks Camp Crest, 1963.**

(Ken Ginn)

In 1969, the Y decided to try and re-establish On-Da-Da-Waks as a wilderness outpost. A recently abandoned fire ranger depot at Ten Mile Lake, which is near the headwaters of the Rivière du Moine, was chosen as a potential new base camp. The Y wanted to "test the waters" there first, and I was one of eight staff chosen to be a guide for forty intrepid thirteen- to fifteen-year-old boys. We were the expeditionary force for this possible change of direction.

The new base camp lacked the natural beauty and charm of the old Golden Lake site. There was a constant cloud of bloodthirsty *mouches noires* at the camp, the local black bears were used to feeding at a nearby dump, and it was accessible only by an infamous, axle-breaking, four-hour

gravel road trip from the village of Rapides des Joachims, Quebec. As a result, we could not wait to escape on canoe trips, which turned out to be spectacular.

Less than five kilometres away from Ten Mile Lake lay Lac du Moine, a huge, beautiful body of water with granite islands and sandy beaches. A constant cool breeze seemed to blow through groves of yellow birch and red pines that formed a canopy over countless campsites and prime fishing points. The Algonquin name for Lac du Moine is 'Kiwegoma Sagahigan ("Turn Back Lake"). The lake consisted of four long bays with one leading in each compass direction: to the west flowed the Kipawa River on its way to Lac Témiscamingue; to the north, portages led over a height of land into La Vérendrye Wildlife Reserve; from the east, the Rivière de L'Orignal came from near the headwaters of the Coulonge and Black rivers; and to the south flowed the Rivière du Moine.

After one year of trying to run canoe trips out of Ten Mile Lake and another year from the downtown Y, enthusiasm and money bottomed out for On-Da-Da-Waks. It closed forever in 1971, seventy-five years after opening. Red Pine Camp Alumni bought the Golden Lake site and formed a private for-profit business that still successfully runs the camp today. I firmly believe that, had we chosen a similar path and a base on Lac du Moine, On-Da-Da-Waks would be still operating there today. But we didn't.

For me, it was just the beginning of an ever-flowing love and business affair with the Du Moine watershed. Using the On-Da-Da-Waks client contact list and the help of former camp staff, I started running my own trips in 1971. At first, they were offered only for boys, but our market quickly changed to adults. With fortuitous timing and a lot of help from friends (such as Dr. John Theberge, my advisor at the University of Waterloo; Jack Pearce and Gary Schofield, my former directors at On-Da-Da-Waks; and Bill Mason, filmmaker, friend, and neighbour), I pushed off into business. My partner, the unflappable Chris Harris, and I,







## Introductions Page VI

and, a decade later, Wendy Grater and Fred Loosemore, built a business we called Black Feather Wilderness Adventures; then another called Trailhead.

Both enterprises had at their core "the experience of the Rivière du Moine." And what was that? Well, it was a glorious amalgam of adventure, hard work, comradeship, and personal achievement, all prompted by a love for wilderness. We went on to run wilderness canoe trips all over Canada's north, on rivers such as the Nahanni, the Coppermine, the Mountain and the Hood. But what really propelled our careers were the white-water and business skills learned on the Du Moine and the clients we trained there, who became motivated to want more.

Looking back, I might have known from those early days at Golden Lake that forces were conspiring to help me truly discover the Du Moine—forces such as contact with the Algonquin Elders at the reserve on Golden Lake. And, while I was paddling the Bonnechere River as a boy, a young farmer who lived downstream (the Bowes farm had been in his family since the 1830s) had ambitions to be a pilot and was trying to decide his future. Ron Bowes and I would share four decades of flying in to the Du Moine.

They say twenty-five years is a generation. After two generations of exploring the Du Moine Valley, I realize that the task of passing on its story, a gift to me from the people who related and created some of its history, is one I must take on in order that it might be preserved. Immortalized. If I were an Algonquin, I would be *telling* you the Du Moine's story, but I'm not; so I am writing it.

The history of man's relationship with the Du Moine watershed and the gateway village of Rapides des Joachims is a snapshot of Canada's history. Today that history is being written by the Quebec government as a proposed future aquatic reserve with strict conservation guidelines surrounded by an existing outdoor playground of Quebec Crown land, half of which is in two ZECs (*zone d'exploitation contrôlée*) managed

by not-for-profit boards to enhance recreational opportunities, especially hunting and fishing.

If you go back fifty years, the valley was a playground leased to private fish and game club members. These clubs were granted up to 100-square-mile leases as their exclusive fishing and hunting reserve. The forest roads and trees were managed by forest rangers sponsored by a flourishing mechanized pulp, paper, and lumber trade.

Another fifty-year backward journey takes you to the peak of the lumber trade era when men walked to the Du Moine Valley shanties with their axes on their shoulders, and supplies were hauled by horse and sleigh to them by hundreds of teams. In the spring, the men would push, pull, and float their winter harvest down the Du Moine and its tributaries to the Du Moine's mouth, where a giant boom held it for the tugboats. The boats of the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company pulled the huge booms, mixtures of every company's stamped logs, down the Ottawa River to the mills at Chaudiere Falls, below Canada's Parliament Buildings. Passenger steamboats still plied the waters between Pembroke and Des Joachims and competed with a new two-decade-old trans-Canada railroad.

Another half century back in history takes you to the beginning of a village built around Rapides des Joachims anchored by a deluxe hotel, for its time, a Hudson's Bay trading post, and a portage. Change becomes slower, and we can peel back a thick layer of history. Four centuries of the moc-casins of First Nations peoples and the boots of European explorers, traders, and priests went over this portage, wearing it down to granite before the village existed. Then they paddled on past the Rivière du Moine on their way west and north. Some of those traders and priests travelled up the Rivière du Moine on their way to bring goods and the Catholic religion to the Algonquins who lived in the Ottawa Valley watershed. The seed and core of man's history here begins with the Algonquin Tribe and the band that claimed



## Introduction Page VII

the Du Moine as theirs. They called the river Ekonakwasi Sipi — Priests' River — which the French then translated as Monks' River, or Rivière du Moine. The Du Moine band of the Algonquin peoples had lived, traded, and died in the Du Moine watershed since time immemorial.

This book is my version of that story and a prediction — a plea — about the watershed's future.



## The Riviere du Moine Band Returns-A Tale of Two Tribes-Page 3

future for their youth that would tie them to the land in a respectful way.

IT'S DIFFICULT —PERHAPS impossible —for a WASP like me to try and tell the story of the Rivière du Moine band; it is their story, not mine, although the European and Algonquin tales certainly overlap. It should be told orally by an elder of the tribe, as was the tradition of the Algonquin since time began. Perhaps if you were to attend one of their annual powwows, you might be fortunate enough to hear part of that history told in the form of a legend.

Any river paddler, no matter what his or her ancestry might be, should know and enjoy the history of the First Nations peoples who paddled up and down the *sipi* (river) they called Ekonakwasi Sipi to trade, visit relatives, wage war, find a marriage partner for a son or daughter, or simply to satisfy an inherent thirst to explore (a thirst I have shared ever since I first put my paddle in the Bonnechere River). This book about a river is itself a flowing current, so before we head downstream, as a matter of respect, I will attempt to pass on the Ekonakwasi Sipi (Du Moine) band's story, using both their sources and those of the post-contact historians.

Throughout history, the meeting of oral societies with those that record their stories has produced confusion and misinterpretation. What the ear hears and the hand writes are seldom in perfect agreement. I am not Algonquin nor do I speak Algonquian, and, more than likely, neither do you. Before you accuse me of being a terrible speller (which I am, and so is history), let me just try to clarify some of those confusions. The language the Du Moine band spoke, and some still speak, is called Algonquian. The language of these speakers as first named by the Europeans was at first spelled *Algommequin* by Samuel de Champlain in his journals. This French spelling with a "qu" evolved into the spelling *Algonquin*, the one with which we are most familiar in English. It is used by many Algonquin bands

themselves, so either spelling with a "qu" or a "k" —as in "Algonkin" —seems acceptable.

A large linguistic family of Algonquian-speaking First Nations peoples populated an area from the Atlantic to the Plains, and so Algonquian became the preferred language learned by translators. The heart, the purest blood of the Algonquian-speaking peoples, is found in the Algonquin tribes of the Ottawa River watershed and the Nipissing, Odawa, Mississaugas, Potawatomi, and Ojibwa tribes that form their immediate neighbours and allies to the west.

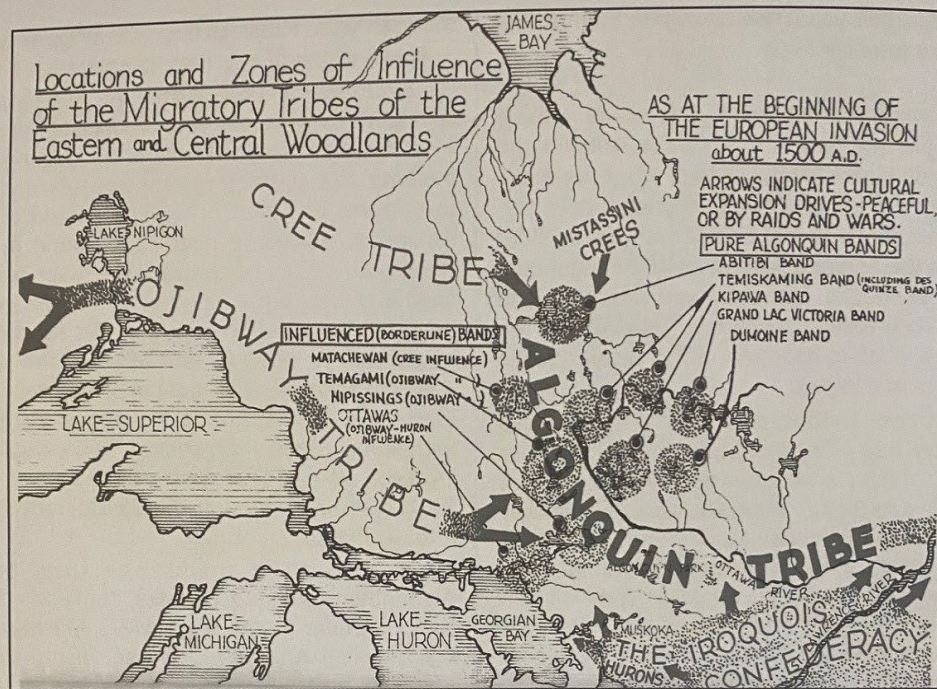
These six tribes were thought to be originally one that migrated from the St. Lawrence and split, with three tribes —Algonquin, Nipissing, and Odawa —going north up the Ottawa River, and the other three west up the St. Lawrence and through to the Great Lakes.

To distinguish themselves from other Algonquian-speaking peoples, these six First Nations prefer to call themselves Anishinabeg (also spelled Anishinaabeg and Nishnaabeg), meaning "the Real [or Good] People." A single member is called an Anishnabe, and the language he or she speaks is Anishabemowin. So in this book, Algonquin will be used for the tribe whose territory was the Ottawa River watershed, Algonquian is their language, and the original tribe of six will be called Anishinabeg, whose language will be termed Anishabemowin.

The entire Ottawa Valley is under study for an ongoing Algonquin land claim, which, if successful, would make everyone not of Algonquin descent a squatter (including me, sitting in my car observing the dancers). In 1605, Champlain, one of the first squatters, sat and watched a war victory (over the Iroquois) dance involving the Algonquin and their allies, the Montagnais (Innu), and Etchemin (Maliseet), where, it is thought, he first heard a Native word to describe the tribe Champlain identified in his journals as "Algommequin," and, in a sense, set in motion that land claim.



## The Riviere du Moine Band Returns-A Tale of Two Tribes-Page 4



Tribal territories ca. 1500.

(Arrow North, Highway Bookshop, 1976)<sup>4</sup>

IN 1615, CHAMPLAIN, who relied on the skill and elegance of the Algonquin canoeists, hired their guiding and outfitting services to take him up the Ottawa, past Des Joachims, the Rivière du Moine, and on to Georgian Bay. So, after four centuries, it seemed fitting to me that descendants of Champlain's guides were re-establishing a business that my tribe had interrupted. Since 1976, we, the Trailhead tribe, had run a similar business at Des Joachims, finally selling it as part of the whole Trailhead business to one of our retail competitors in 2012. Trips on the Rivière du Moine were the first commercial whitewater river trips Trailhead and Black Feather offered. We guided trips, rented canoes, and ran whitewater canoeing workshops for thousands of clients between 1976 and 2012. As such, we had an intimate knowledge

of the river and an irrational passion to run a rental base there from Ottawa. Lacking that passion, the new owners of Trailhead took one look at the finances and logistics and immediately axed the satellite rental base, opening the door for the Wolf Lake band to expand its Long Sault Island operation at the foot of Lac Témiscamingue. It takes irrational passion to make some businesses work. We had it for the Rivière du Moine, and the new Algonquin Canoe and Kayak Company does, too. Modern-day Champlains would be wise to start their journeys with them.

The Algonquin Canoe and Kayak Des Joachims base consists of a rental office; a rack of rental canoes, kayaks, and mountain bikes; a laundromat; and the Nanabush Café. Nanabush, originally called Nenabojo or Wiskedjak (whisky



# The Inganville Leader

1902

100 Years of Publishing

2002



## REFLECTIONS OF A CENTURY

Stories and Photos from  
the Ottawa Valley



## **One of the Tragedies on the Du Moine River**

**My Uncle Paul Turcotte was one of the last members of our family to work on the log drives in more modern times in 1923 on the Du Moine River.**

**Log Drives were considered to be very exhausting and dangerous work. And young men like my Uncle Paul had no choice but to do what the job boss told them to do; if they wanted to keep their jobs.**

**This was the story we were told. Uncle Paul and three other men loaded the boat with the camp stove and other camp paraphernalia and went down the Du Moine River. As stated in the following article, unfortunately they were caught in the swift currents at the head of the rapids. Gagnon and Turcotte remained with the boat while the other two jumped and safely made it to shore.**

**Victor Gagnon of Chichester and Paul Turcotte of Black Bay lost their lives that day at Poplar Chute, on the Du Moine River four miles from Stonecliffe.**

**Please see the following article written on Page 133 from this book.**

**“The Eganville Leader”**

**Reflections of a Century**

**Stories and Photos from the Ottawa Valley.**



## 1923 Briefs

May 25

**Two Men Drowned On Timber Drive**

*Pembroke, May 21* -- News of the drowning of two young men well known in Pembroke, at Poplar Chute, on the Dumoine River, about four miles from Stonecliffe, has reached here. The unfortunate young men, Messrs. Victor Gagnon of Chichester, Que., and Paul Turcotte of Black Bay, were in the employment of the Pembroke Lumber company engaged on a log drive, and, together with the rest of the men, were moving camp to the head of the chute.

From information received, it appears that the victims and two other men started down stream in a boat, and, before they were aware of the fact, were caught in the swift current at the head of the rapids. Gagnon and Turcotte remained with the boat while the other two jumped and safely made the shore.

\*\*\*\*\*

June 1

**Prime Minister of Ontario Visits Eganville**

Hon. E. C. Drury, Prime Minister of Ontario, when entering Eganville town hall on Wednesday afternoon, and seeing an assembly of close on one thousand people, was well pleased, and on reaching the platform, expressed himself thus to the newspaper men present. The electors of the two ridings for a radius of 20 miles and beyond had come to see and hear the distinguished leader of the Ontario Government. On entering the hall, the Premier was greeted with a tremendous outburst of cheering. He was accompanied by Mr. R. M. Warren and Mr. John Carty, U. F. O. candidates in North and South Renfrew.

\*\*\*\*\*

July 6

**Horrible Holocaust At Barry's Bay**

*Barry's Bay, June 29* -- Fire took a toll here this morning of three human beings, Mrs. Frank Pecarskie and her baby, and a girl friend, Miss Agnes Biernacki, 16-years-old, first cousin of Rev. Father Biernacki, also of Barry's Bay.

The three were asleep in Mrs. Pecarskie's home last night when fire broke out and burnt the frame house to the ground. The house is a little removed from its neighbors, standing almost isolated on the shores of the bay. Early this morning, neighbors were attracted by a conflagration in the direction of Mrs. Pecarskie's home, and, rushing out, found the house a mass of flames. There was no sign of the three occupants, and, when the blaze had died down, the charred remains of the three occupants of the home were discovered. The origin of the fire is unknown, but there is a theory that it commenced from a 'smudge' which had been built up earlier in the evening to drive away the mosquitoes and flies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two cars crashed into each other in front of the Home Bank on Tuesday evening, causing considerable damage to both. The drivers, the only occupants, escaped injury. We observe that in many of the Ottawa Valley towns there is a tightening of the regulations governing the speed of automobiles while on main thoroughfares. With the steady increase in the number of cars, and the desire for speed, which is so apparent, the authorities, aiming to protect life and limb, are insisting on obedience to traffic rules.

\*\*\*\*\*

Eganville's oldest landmark -- the Lacey "red store" -- is disappearing from view. Since yesterday workmen have been demolishing it. The *Leader* is informed it was built by John Egan, the founder of Eganville, 100 years ago, if not more. From the estate of John Egan, the store and adjoining properties passed

into the possession of the late Daniel Lacey, and the ownership has come down to his son, Mr. J.P. Lacey. The late James Bonfield, M.P.P. and the late Robert Campbell, M.P. served there in one capacity or another.

\*\*\*\*\*

July 27

**Jas. Findlay, Ex-M.P. Dies At Pembroke**

*Pembroke, July 23* -- Struggling valiantly for several days from the results of a stroke, Mr. James Findlay, ex-M.P., for North Renfrew, died today. The late Mr. Findlay, who was in his 90th year, was one of Pembroke's most prominent citizens. Born at Chateaugay, Que., in 1833, the late Mr. Findlay came to Pembroke under the employment of the firm of William and David Belle. Eventually he started in business for himself in Coulange, where his capacity and brilliancy became the more manifest. In 1872 Mr. Findlay was elected as a Liberal to the House of Commons, defeating the late Hon. Peter White. Previous to this victory in 1869, he was nominated as Liberal candidate in a by-election but was defeated. His opponent in this battle was one of Canada's distinguished statesmen, the late Sir Francis Hincks, Minister of Finance in the Cabinet of Sir John A. MacDonald. The late Mr. Findlay, desirous to make potential his powers as a political observer, was one of the first editors of the *Pembroke Observer*.

\*\*\*\*\*

August 10

**Mr. E. A. Lisk Buys Gourlay Property**

Mr. E.A. Lisk, who is a firm believer in the broadening out policy from a business point of view, has purchased from the Est. J. C. Gourlay, their furniture and undertaking business and property on John Street, considered one of the best business stands in Eganville. Mr. Lisk will be given possession September 1. He has no plans for immediate execution but he intimated to *The Leader* that he will add another line or more to his present business as baker and confectioner.

\*\*\*\*\*

August 17

Contractor R. Reinke is making satisfactory progress with the new public school building in town. The brick work will soon be completed and the interior of the building is well in hand. If nothing in the meantime prevents, the school should be ready for occupancy in October. Mr. Reinke hopes to have the new St. John's Lutheran church at Germanicus completed in September. The latter edifice is of red brick and presents a very handsome appearance. Mr. H. Bimm's new brick residence on Bonnechere street will also soon be finished.

\*\*\*\*\*

August 24

Governor Smith of Vermont has been occupying his summer camp in the Madawaska district. Among his distinguished guests during the past week was Sir Henry Thornton, President of the Canadian National Railways.

\*\*\*\*\*

September 7

**Sad Drowning Accident**

A gloom was cast over the community on Thursday afternoon of last week when the news spread that the little son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bimm, Jr., met death by drowning. He and a number of young companions were disporting themselves in the Bonnechere at Lett's Landing when the boy got beyond his depth and drowned. His companions strived in every manner to effect a rescue and had almost succeeded when the limp body slipped from their exhausted arms back into the water.



**Referring back to this book once again “The Last of the Wild Rivers” there is a paragraph on the top left of page 3 in Chapter One.**

**It states that if a story was told in the past, it would have been told orally by an Elder and not in writing. It was a tradition of the Algonquin since time began.**

**The Algonquin history is an oral history, yet you want us to produce documents written from 200 years ago that say we are Algonquin; this is asking for the impossible.**

**Submitted By:**

**Connie Mielke**

**Denise Chaput**