

SHANTY DAYS

By R. J. Taylor

The following article by Mr. Robert J. Taylor, Arrnprior appeared in Your Forest and in the Globe and Mail. It is reproduced here by special permission.

Mr. Taylor is an old shanty cook who served his time on the Madawaska and in later years with Austin & Nicolson in lumber camps in the Chapleau area. Now 90 years of age Mr. Taylor is still mentally alert and is now one of our greatest living authorities on old days in the bush and on the river.

In the fall when I was fifteen, I said to my father? "I think I will go to the lumber camp for the winter." A lot of the young fellows used to go to the lumber camps and some farmers went also with their teams of horses. They could make a few badly needed dollars over the winter months.

On September 22, 1902 I went to the lumber camp. The foreman's name was Archie Campbell who had been raised on the banks of the Madawaska River. I told him I had come to see if I could get work. He was a big tall husky fellow who looked down at me and said, 'What can you do?' I told him I had worked in the bush and could use an axe. He said, 'All right, I will give you a job.'

The next morning he sent me out with a gang of log cutters. There were 6 men in the gang. 2 men felled the trees and cut them into 16 foot logs. The 2 trail cutters cut the limbs off the logs and piled the brush. The trail men cut a road for the man and the team of horses to draw the logs out to the skidways. Here the roller piled the logs so they were ready to be hauled to the river in the winter. I liked the work and was quite at home in the bush.

One morning as we were all going out to work the foreman was at the door. He stopped me and told me to stay in and help the cook.

I had been in the camp about 2 weeks so then I knew pretty well what had to be done. That is 73 years ago and I can remember the layout of the camp and what it looked like.

It was one large building all under one roof. It was built out of long pine logs with 4 small windows in the roof which were hinged on one side. By using a long pole the window could be raised for ventilation if so desired. There were no windows in the walls and only one door. As you came in the door there was a barrel full of water for the men to use for washing. Along the wall there was a trough with 6 washbasins. A man could take a wash basin and dip some water from the barrel. Sometimes there were pieces of ice in it. Then the basin was placed in the trough to wash the hands and face. The basin was later dumped in the trough and the water ran out through a hold in the wall. There were 6 roller towels on which the men dried their hands and face. In the same corner of the camp there were 2 grindstones for sharpening axes. They were kept busy from supper time to bed time.

Along the rest of that side of the camp and across the other side and part way along the third wall were the bunk beds. There were bottom bunks and a row of top bunks. Two men slept in each bunk with their heads toward the wall. A bench ran all the way around the foot of the bunks. It was made out of long logs, flattened on 1 side with big wooden pins in the lower side for legs. The men in the top bunks used the bench as a step to get into their bunks.

Next came the clerk's place. He had a big box made out of rough lumber about 8 feet long and 4 feet wide and 4 feet high, with a lid and a padlock. This was called the van. Here he kept socks, mitts, shirts, moccasins and clothing for the men. Also plug chewing and smoking tobacco but no fine cut or cigarettes. He also kept his books there. There was also a cook's corner with a big camp stove.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE EARLY CHURCHES AND PREACHERS

From "THE STORY OF RENFREW"

by W.E. Smallfield and Rev. Robert Campbell, D. Sc.

(quoted by Special Permission)

Before there were settlers in Renfrew there were Indians encamped at Golden Lake. It is quite possible therefore that with the missionary zeal which characterized the priests of the Roman Catholic Church in seeking to Christianize the aborigines, some Father of that denomination first set foot in the Bonnechere district of Renfrew County. But so far as the community now known as Renfrew is concerned, the credit of sending the first missionary belongs to the Methodist Episcopalians. At this late day it is not known just what brought Rev. Mr. Maitland to the early settlement, but it is thought that Mrs. Mayhew, mother of Mr. Elkanah Mayhew, our present citizen, was possibly responsible for it. She was a devoted member of that denomination: and she had a son whom she desired to have baptized. This, whether it was the motive for his coming or not, was one of the first duties of Mr. Maitland. He preached in the log barn on the McLean property, then tenanted by the Airth family. He came a few times and was followed by Reverends Manley, Howe, Williams, Bearney, Steppen Brownell, West, Manson, Pomeroy, Sparrow and Maston. In just what years these pioneer preachers journeyed to and fro in the district is not now definitely remembered. Probably Sparrow and Maston at least came after the 1850 period, where we are drawing a division in our historical record. It is in memory, though, that the settlers profanely dubbed Mr. Brownell, "Boanerges". He mended boots and harness, and set up finger boards to guide the wanderers through the forest, as well as preached to guide the settlers to a higher spiritual state. Mr. West had a peculiarity. He had the sight of one eye only, his wife was similarly afflicted, and so was his dog. As far as can now be gathered, Mr. West was the first to make his residence

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here. He dwelt in a little house just on the south side of Smith's Creek. His predecessors were not regularly stationed, but came and went, at first on foot and then on horseback. Sometimes they preached in the McLean barn, at other times, when the weather was favorable, in the open air or in the woods. Then, when the first schoolhouse was built, out on what is now Wm. Barr's farm, that was utilized for services. Later still, the ambition of a church building of their own was indulged in, and some time in the early 40's the dream became a reality. The site was donated by Xavier Plaunt, and a log building, perhaps 24 x 30 feet in dimensions was erected. There were no architectural frills about it. No suspicion of a spire, not even a Gothic touch to the windows. Seats were of the most primitive description. Oratorical excellence was not a feature of the ministrations of most of those early preachers so far as is now recollected. Earnest and vigorous they were, but mostly unlettered.

As has been noted, these pioneer missionaries were of the Episcopal branch of the Methodist family. The Wesleyans sent their first representatives in 1851; and consequently they should not find recognition in the First Division of the History.

It may be taken for granted that a community in which the Scotch were from the start a considerable factor, was not so long in seeking for the means of grace through a Presbyterian channel. In those days it would probably go harder with a good sturdy old Scotchman to have his children christened by a Methodist than it would be today. The divisions then seemed greater. But with the younger men, even then, there was a degree of liberality. Mr. Henry Airth, then Junior but now Senior, did not hesitate to have his two eldest children baptized by the Methodist, Rev. Mr. Manson.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Arnprior Conference "Exploring our Heritage, the Ottawa Valley Experience" sponsored by the Ontario Heritage Foundation in Arnprior on October 21-22 was an out-standing success. Over 650 registered but as many failed to do so the actual attendance has been estimated to be nearer 1000 with almost 400 sitting down to the banquet.

An account of the conference with names of Renfrew members participating was carried in the Mercury at the time.

The success of the Conference demonstrated that interest in Heritage is very much alive and growing in Ontario. Our Ottawa Valley is particularly rich in heritage and history and many of the speakers discussed pre geological and archeological features, Indian life, the coming of the white man, the early explorers, the fur trade, the timber and lumbering trade, agriculture, transportation and many other topics relating to our area. Workshops were set up dealing with education, archives and research, museums and architectural conservation. In the halls and classrooms of Arnprior High School were set up many exhibits which would do credit to any museum.

It is a question when the Ontario Heritage Foundation may again sponsor a similar conference again in our area. Another year it may be set up elsewhere. However, let us hope that next spring the Ottawa Valley Historical Society will again host a "Heritage Symposium in Pembroke. They have done a good job with their Symposium in the past and while not as large as at Arnprior there have been many points of similarity in organization and purpose served.

Historical Research Seminar

Heritage Renfrew was well represented at the Historical Research Seminar sponsored by the Ontario Historical Society in Ottawa on Saturday, November 11th. Judy Beattie of Eastern Ontario Archivists Association who set up our Archives in Renfrew spoke and referred to the important papers that have been preserved in Renfrew Archives. Pat Kennedy of P A C who has been consultant for Renfrew Archives and of valuable assistance spoke on Resource Material available in Public Archives and Clyde Kennedy, Honorary Member of Heritage Renfrew was a speaker on panel of writers.

Commander W A B Douglas, Director of history at National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa was co-ordinator of the sessions which were attended by many researchers including Halina Jeletzky of Heritage Section, Experience 78 and Harry Hinchley.

The sessions which dealt particularly with basic steps and helpful rules in researching and writing were of great interest and value to archivists, historians and writers. Other meetings along similar lines are soon to be held in Napanee and in London under direction of the Ontario Historical Society.

HEATHER ROBERTSON, author of "Salt of the Earth" and "A Terrible Beauty" visited Renfrew in August and interviewed many older citizens and visited historical properties, in preparation for a new book she is writing. She spent considerable time in our Library and after a visit at our Archives she remarked "You have here a gold mine."

The Eastern Ontario Archivists Association

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This organization was established in May 1978 to promote appreciation among the public, Organizations and Governments of the Fundamental Cultural Role of Archives and to advance the work of the repositories in the Region. Archivists and people interested in Archives are invited to join the Association and participate in its activities. Membership Fee is \$10.00 per year. For information contact Mr Bruce Wilson, 323 James St., Ottawa.

The Association observed National Archives Day, November 19th with an event entitled "ARCHIVES IN YOUR ATTIC" which was held in Tabaret Hall, University of Ottawa. A portion of this meeting was televised over CBOT, Ottawa when Judy Beattie, who worked at the Renfrew Archives during the past two summers was shown advising on historical evaluation and conservation of old letters, diaries, photographs, posters, maps, films and documents.

The Association plans other activities with discussions and workshops on Archival Education and Professional Development, The Role of The Archives in the Community, Public Access to Archival Resources and other related subjects. On December 2nd at the RA Center, Ottawa there is to be a Christmas Dinner and Dance.

The Ontario Historical Society has this summer published 2 booklets in a new series called "Approaching Ontario's Past." The first booklet is "The Local Historical Society and the Schools" by Gerald E Boyce, Vice-Principal of Moira Secondary School in Belleville and a leading member of Hastings County Historical Society. Mr Boyce writes "The local historical society and the schools in its area should be the best of friends. Each party is involved in the processes of education, enlightenment and entertainment and each stands to benefit through an increased awareness and participation in the other's activities." "Normally most societies have executive members who are educators. If such is not the case, a society would be well advised to consider one or more teachers on its executive. An alternative is to create a special committee consisting of interested society members, teachers, school administrators and trustees and perhaps several senior students to co-ordinate the efforts of the society and the schools." The booklet has chapters on "Role of Historical Society" "Role of the School" and the Role of the School Board in historical work.

A Second Booklet is entitled "Organizing for Preservation" by Frederick H Armstrong, President of Ontario Historical Society and an active preservationist. It deals with organization and work of Local Architectural Conservatio Advisory Committee (LACAC) to preserve buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance in the community. Chapters in the booklet include "Preparing Lists of Properties for Designation" "Publicity" "Financing etc. The booklet is a must for those interested in preserving buildings of Architectural and Historical importance in the community.

RAGLAN STREET, RENFREW

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(From the LACAC Book issued for Peterbor Conference, August, 1978)

The prosperity of Renfrew and some of its citizens in by-gone days is reflected in many of the old buildings which stand today as monuments to the business acumen and commercial ambitions of these early pioneers.

Conspicuous on the skyline as seen from the eastern approach along Highway 17 are the two church spires of Trinity-St Andrews United Church and St Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Churches. In the early days of the settlement before Renfrew was even a village the pioneer landowner and developer Xavie Plaunt donated one lot of his bush farm to the Presbyterians for their church and another lot beside it to the Rlam Catholics. The present Trinity-St Andrews Church dates back to 1884 but the St Francis Xavier Church of the same period was burned down in 1964. The new church was built on adjoining land but parts of the old walls of the former church are now incorporated into the Parish Hall.

On the Upper End of Raglan St one block west from the churches the most prominent building is the tall four-story O'Brien Apartments. It was built in 1909 by M J O'Brien a local capitalist who was a railway construction contractor, miner, lumberman and industrialist. He was later appointed to the Canadian Senate.

O'Brien wanted his town to have an opera house so he erected a suitable building and named it the O'Brien Opera House. With such a fine theatre Renfrew was included in the same show circuit as Ottawa, Toronto and other cities.

Many of the best grand opera companies and theatrical troupes on tour through Canada would play Renfrew and the socially prominent of the town would occupy the box seats in the opera house.

Later the Opera House was used as a motion picture theatre but with the advent of the talkies O'Brien built a new O'Brien Theatre on the adjoining lot and remodelled the opera house into an apartment building.

A block further north stands another high building - the former Barnet Block built in 1894 by Alex Barnet, a wealthy timber baron. It housed the Merchants Bank of which he was a director.

At the northern end of the same block is the Old Mackay Building, now the Haramis Restaurant. It was built in 1897 by William Mackay a former lumber partner of Alex Barnet. The building was used by Mackay's sons for the town's biggest dry goods and grocery business until the early days of World War I. William Mackay was also Renfrew's postmaster and part of the building was used for Renfrew's post office until the present stone post office was built on the other side of the street in 1908.

Between the Barnet and Mackay Buildings are three other brick business blocks built around the turn of the century. They are all in the style of the day with ornate pediments and bear the dates of construction. Renfrew is situated on beds of good brick clay and the town for many years was the centre of brick making. Renfrew brick was used in these buildings and they are all good examples of brick layer's art.

Further down Raglan Street is another 3-storey brick building built in 1883 by the prosperous merchant firm of Stewart Bros. It has a fancy top bearing the date of construction. The building is now unique in that it is still provided with six chimneys.

(to be continued)

MEMBERSHIP in Heritage Renfrew

Have you renewed your membership in Heritage Renfrew for 1979? If you have, thanks. If not, we will be glad to have you do so. Memberships are available from any member of the Membership Committee:

- Jessie Stewart, Chairman
- Helen Clark
- Marge Lindsay
- Dorothy Skinner
- Les Anderson
- Harry Hinchley

Our Membership Fee like so many other things had to go up and this year is \$3.00.

But still it is less than the price of a restaurant meal or even less than the cost of a haircut.

MEMBERSHIP in Heritage Canada

This year Heritage Renfrew is not accepting payment of memberships in Heritage Canada. To become a member of that organization membership fee must be sent to:

Heritage Canada
 Box 1358 Sta B
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K1P 5R4

New rates are:

- Life \$250.00
- Household 15.00
- Individual 10.00
- Senior Citizen or Student 5.00

These new rates are only a reflection of higher costs.

HERITAGE DAY

Plans are going forward for the observation of Heritage Day in Renfrew in February. The schools are being contacted for participation; the merchants are offering their windows for displays and the Senior Citizens are again putting on their drop in with fun, entertainment and refreshments. Other groups will be taking part and posters will soon be put up.

HERITAGE FAIR AND FLEA MARKET

Renfrew and District Historical Society and Heritage Renfrew are co-operating in the holding of a Heritage Fair and Flea Market at Bonnechere Manor around the middle of February. A committee under the Chairmanship of Jessie Stewart has been formed and a meeting has been held.

The date has not yet been set but it will likely be around the middle of February. As in other years there will be displays and exhibits of a historical or heritage nature. There will also be antiques and crafts for sale by dealers. There will be refreshments and entertainment as in other years and the people of Renfrew may look forward to a worthwhile few hours in a visit to Heritage Fair and Flea Market.

German Newspaper Published in Arnprior: Do any of our readers know of a German newspaper that was printed in Arnprior from 1903 to 1916? It was later taken to Pembroke but soon went out of business. If any copies or information are available we will be glad to hear.