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Cover image: Early twentieth-century sleigh haul. (TBHMS 2013.50.700)
In This Issue

This issue of the *Papers & Records* contains two articles, a memoir, and a photo-essay that all contribute to our understanding of Northwestern Ontario’s history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

It begins with a fascinating photo essay contributed by Peter and William (Bill) Skrepichuk. The first in a two-part series, it tells the story of the Vert Island sandstone quarry during its first phase between 1880 and 1895. A small but vital industry for the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its story has been little discussed despite the iconic role the buildings constructed in many American and Canadian cities from the stone quarried. The 38 images, accompanying discussion, and wonderful chronology at the end, begin to fill this gap.

Our second contribution explores a better-known industry, pulp and paper. In recognition of the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Lakehead’s first pulp and paper maker in 1916, the Port Arthur Pulp and Paper Company, Laurentian University historian Mark Kuhlberg, outlines the origins and early history of the company. Not only does he provide a succinct overview, but also challenges the long-held notion that provincial and federal governments actively supported the establishment of the industry, motivated by the desire to ensure the development of resource dependent communities.

As new industries developed at the Lakehead, they were accompanied by both an influx of immigrants to the region and new social challenges. In the aftermath of violent incidents that pitted immigrant workers against police in 1906 and 1909, individuals and organizations began to consider how to respond. Mark Chochla explores the Methodist Church’s establishment of the Wesley Institute (known also as the Wayside House) in the coal docks, its activities, and the role of the Reverend James M. Shaver.

The experience of immigrants is also the focus of Stan Granic’s translation of Franjo (Frank) Tadej’s memoir. Tadej’s story is an important contribution to little discussed experiences of the over
8,500 civilians who were interned in Canada between 1914 and 1920. Tadej’s memoir is all the more unique as it describes the story of two Croatian immigrants: his own story of successfully evading Canadian authorities during the war and eventually crossing to the United States, and that of his friend Luka Ćalić who stayed in Port Arthur, was arrested, and sent to a Kapuskasing internment camp.

Two new features also continue in this issue. Firstly our profile of regional historical societies continues with Marilyn Young’s look at the accomplishments of the Red Rock Historical Society during the last fifteen years. Secondly, Board Member and Lakehead University graduate student Jenna Kirker has compiled our section on recent books and articles focused on the history of Northern Ontario. Finally, the yearly reports of the Director/Curator, Tory Tronrud, Society President Frank Gerry, and a tribute to the late Harry Kirk round out the issue.

Editors:  
Michel S. Beaulieu  
Beth Boegh
**Contributors**

**Mark Chochla** is a retired Thunder Bay teacher and long-time member of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society. He is a past president of the Society and is currently a member of its Publication Committee.

**Stan Granic** is a research associate with the Croatian Canadian Internment Project. He has contributed to Canadian Ethnic Studies, Labour/Le Travail, The Michigan Historical Review, and other periodicals.

**Mark Kuhlberg** is a Professor of History and Director of the MA History/maitrise en histoire programs at Laurentian University. His expertise is the history of Ontario’s forests in particular and Canada’s in general, and he has published numerous articles and two books in these fields. Mark spent twenty seasons in the silvicultural industry in northern Ontario, and remains actively involved in contemporary forestry issues.

**Peter Skrepichuk** currently works at St. Michael’s College, U of T. Since 2000 he has extensively researched the history of stone masonry architecture in the upper great lakes region with special attention to Chicago (1880s) and Vert Island sandstone.

**William Skrepichuk** is a retired Engineer who has spent over thirty years working in the Nipigon Bay area. Since 2006 he has been actively researching, writing, and speaking on the early construction and industrial history along the north shore of Lake Superior.

**Marilyn Young** first became interested in the history of Red Rock when hired as a Library Assistant in 1979. Later she was put in charge of the library’s History Project and worked on collecting, cataloguing, and preserving all the information in its collection. In 1995 she wrote a history of Red Rock in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Red Rock. When a group of interested citizens decided it was time to have a Historical Society it seemed like a natural fit and she has been a member of the executive of the Society since 2000.
The history of the Vert Island sandstone quarry spans multiple decades but can best be discussed in two distinct phases. The first phase lasted from 1881 to the mid-1890s and is the story that will be told in this paper. The second phase was from 1900 to 1913 and will be the subject of a second paper to appear at a later date.

A photo essay format has been chosen to best portray and honour the era and influence of this small but vital industry in our area. Although images were scarce for some aspects of the quarry’s history, those that have survived provide invaluable information and fun to work with. The Vert Island sandstone story can be traced through history because stone construction leaves an honest and visible trail. This masonry material continues to be identifiable in the buildings and structures that still survive in many U.S. and Canadian cities.

Vert Island Sandstone and Chicago

The story of Vert Island quarry must be understood first and
foremost as a very specific solution to a timely opportunity. The above bird's-eye view of the area around the Board of Trade building as it appeared in 1893 shows just how densely built up the area became. It was within a few blocks of the Board of Trade that the majority of the large office buildings would be built using Vert Island sandstone.

Charles Cummings was an Irish stonemason who, for most of the 1860s and 1870s, had been in partnership with another Irish stonemason named Thomas F. Hagan. Cummings & Hagan had a stone yard on Sherman Street in Chicago and had profited greatly from the busy early years of rebuilding after that city's 1871 fire. By 1875, Cumming & Hagan had dissolved their business, but not before building row houses on the property of their former stone yard. The sale of these houses and extra land provided a large profit to Cummings that would prove useful for his next venture. His attention turned to finding a quarry location that could supply stone to a city that was on the verge of its most famous era of growth. The spark that ignited this building boom was the decision of the Chicago Board of Trade in 1880 to relocate its headquarters to a new and underdeveloped section of Chicago. The increased property values and

Birds Eye view of the Board of Trade area of Chicago (Rand McNally, Birds's-Eye Views and Guide to Chicago, 1893, 15).
rents associated with the relocation would mean that there would be a huge demand for building materials. The fact that Cummings' old stone yard was located on Sherman street, a mere two blocks away from the new site of Board of Trade offices, would suggest he must have known of this possibility when property agents started buying up all the available parcels of land.

**Exploration**

In the middle of Nipigon Bay, at the northwest corner west of Lake Superior, is located Vert Island. On the island was a promising outcrop of reddish brown sandstone that appeared very thick and undisturbed. It was an obviously marketable masonry building stone surrounded by less suitable formations with similar chemical and geological make-up in the area. Its valuable characteristics were recognized in the spring of 1881 by Duncan McEachen of Fort William who staked a mineral location on the Island. Later that same year Charles M. Cummings would acquire the site and have provincial surveyor John M. Jones PLS of Sarnia create an official survey of the property that would be called 12N [see above]. By the end of 1881 the province officially granted location 12N to Cummings. Even though all of this seems to have taken place quite quickly, it is evident that Cummings would have preferred...
that it happen faster. The lawyer facilitating the granting of 12N to Cummings states in a letter to the government that the “the season is so far advanced that this is an object of great importance to my client and I am anxious to obtain the patent as soon as possible.” (Archives of Ontario: 12N Patent Application)

The Company

The image below lists the transactions that were associated with the mining property 12N. After the first year of operation in 1882, General John McArthur who had been employed as quarry manager took over full responsibility for operations. With the financial backing of McArthur’s brother-in-law, Hugh Templeton, Cummings and McArthur incorporated the Chicago and Vert Island Lake Superior, Brown Stone Company, on 21 April 1883. Next, McArthur and Templeton proceeded to buy out the remaining interests Cummings had in the quarry. Together with later partners Philip Henne and Gustav Stieglitz, two Chicago cut stone contractors, the company proceeded to invest heavily in expanding its operational capacity. This infrastructure was needed to supply the increased demand for the stone, the result of McArthur’s effective marketing and his vast array of connections in Chicago.

For many of the buildings constructed in Chicago, Vert Island stone was cut at the Young & Farrel stone yard located along the south branch of the Chicago River. In fact so strong was the connection between Young & Farrel and the Vert Island Company that in 1885 McArthur and his business partners moved their offices to the same riverside property. Young & Farrel were instrumental in having Vert Island stone selected for buildings in Minneapolis, Minnesota, St. Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Left: Hugh Templeton President of Chicago & Vert Island Stone Company, 1883-1889.
Right: General John McArthur, Manager of Vert Island quarry, 1883-1892. (Source: Chicago History Museum)

Advertisement for the Young & Farrel, Diamond Stone Sawing Co., Chicago (Source: Real Estate and Building Journal, February 1884)

Caption: For many of the buildings constructed in Chicago, Vert island stone was cut at the Young & Farrel stone yard located along the south branch of the Chicago River. In fact so strong was the connection between Young & Farrel and the Vert Island Company that in 1885 McArthur and his business partners moved their offices to the same riverside property. Young & Farrel were instrumental in having Vert Island stone selected for buildings in Minneapolis, Minnesota, St. Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky.
These images and notes were made by Alfred R.C. Selwyn, Director of the Geological Survey of Canada during his 1882 field trip along the north shore of Lake Superior. He made a stop at the Vert Island quarry, which had just been started in the spring of that year.

Started at 9 am – reached Isle Verte Stone Quarry at 12:30... Took photos of Quarry (5 & 6) – ‘There seems to be only about 6 – 7 ft. of good stone – fine red and some white.” The Manager thinks the stone does not pass under the trap which comes down to the waters edge at the west point. The trap certainly looks like a large dyke, it does not touch the shore again on the S W side of the Island. (NAC rg45 v172 2732 1882, pp. 30-31)

In 1883 Alfred R.C. Selwyn returned to the region and on July 27, 1883 made a second visit to the quarry. His overall opinion of the quarry’s prospects was not positive.

... quarries on Isle Verte & La Grange – some large blocks being got – but in my opinion too much waste to be profitable—price 1.25 / c. ft. (NAC rg45 v172 2735 1883, p. 19)
In his 1891 book, *Stone for Building and Decoration*, Dr. George Merrill wrote:

The stone is of fine and even brown colour and reported to occur in inexhaustible quantities and that blocks as large as can be handled can readily be obtained. An 18-inch cube from this locality in the collections of the national museum shows it to be one of the most attractive appearing of our red sandstones. It cuts to a sharp and firm edge and every appearance would indicate it to be very durable though possibly liable to fade slightly on exposure. Its high level of hardness is a problem and cannot be sawn with sand in the usual manner but must be cut either with diamond toothed circular saws or by means of chilled iron globules.

Microscope examination of a thin section indicates closely compacted grains of quartz and feldspar with occasional shreds of mica interspersed with iron oxides serving as a cement and give colour to the stone. The feldspars are often kaolinized and there is an occasional grain of calcite.

Dr. Phil Fralick, Lakehead University Geology Department, made a number of physical observations during a group visit to Vert Island and the quarry site, June 2015, summarized as follows:

The sandstone layers were very thickly bedded (24” plus) with large uniform well cemented
grains. Bedding was most probably deposited as underwater slurry-like flows off river mouths with sand transported during violent storms and deposited as massive layers in an ancient shallow sea. No additional reworking appears present by intrusive flows of trap rock or plate folding. A high level of silica cement appears present in this sandstone. The formation was very unique to the area and has obvious value as a masonry building stone.

Top left: Vert Island stone handling & loading dock facility, looking west, c.1885 (TBHMS 988.59.125) Quarry site works included a large boarding house and a blacksmith's shop. Equipment included two steam "Channel" drills, five hoisting derricks, and a series of transfer carts. Stone was cut into the most marketable shape, to saving freight on the waste in undressed stone. At Vert Island quarry from 1881-1888, regular supply steamer vessels such as the OCEAN, E.M. FOSTER, BUTCHER BOY, MANITOBA and CHAMPION would carry food supplies, hardware, powder, and later mail delivery. Major mining equipment such as derricks, drills, rails, carts, and winches were delivered by steamers, namely: A. NEFF, J.S. SEAVERNS, and NEPIGON

Middle left: Vert Island stone handling down to dock facility, looking east, c.1885 (TBHMS 984.104.23) The quarry was only about 250 feet from the loading dock which was 100 feet long and in 13 feet of water. Derricks were located at each end of a double tram-way, with the loaded car coming down while pulling up the empty one.

Bottom left: Vert Island quarry workings, looking south, c.1885 (TBHMS 972.35.6) This image shows the method of quarrying and how stonemasons worked with the natural bedding plains of separation that were available, drilled hole patterns with steam drills or hand tools, and finally used 'wedge & feather' techniques to break blocks free into large 'Ton Stones'. 'Dimension Stones' were trimmed to blocks measuring 8ft x 4ft x 2ft (5 tons) in size. A ten-ton derrick lifted the blocks onto an elevated transfer cart to forward along to the loading dock. Working conditions were rugged for this small group of workers. Living conditions on the island were also Spartan, however marriages, births and deaths were recorded. Many workers were Scandinavian Americans with families. A post office was applied for in spring of 1883 and opened one year later; it remained until the spring of 1888 with some interruptions.
Since there was no means of tugboat assistance available at the quarry dock, schooners would sail up to the wooden cribbed dock carrying minimum sail and centerboard raised, luff the sails and come along side. Hopefully, the wind and weather were favourable for this manoeuver as the dock was located to have only some protection other than from strong winds over a long fetch from the north-west or south. Loading would normally take two to three days. Positioning and securing of the stones was extremely important as a loose load in rough seas could spell disaster for the voyage by easily damaging the hull, as frequently occurred.

Dimension stone blocks, quarried in sizes up to 5 tons, were all loaded and placed by shore-mounted derricks, onto three-masted wooden schooners, namely: SLIGO, LADY DUFFERIN, MARY L. HIGGIE, JOHN BIGLER, ELGIN, JOHN RABER, T.L. PARKER, MIDLAND ROVER, PRIDE of AMERICA, and KEEWATIN. The majority of these schooners would handle at least a 300-ton burden and- fully rigged, would carry over 6,000 square feet of cotton canvas sail, all handled by a ten-man crew.
The three-masted schooner SLIGO was owned by George Graham and based out of Port Arthur from 1883-97. Most historians bypass schooner passage stories preferring to focus on books of shipwrecks or technical discussions involving ship specifications. Below is an episode report of the SLIGO bound from Vert Island to Chicago in November 1883, sailed by master George Graham.

THE SLIGO OVERDUE. – INQUIRES IN REGARD TO HER. – Anxious inquiries are made for the schooner SLIGO, laden with building stone and bound for Chicago from Vert Island, Lake Superior, which place she left Nov. 7. Yesterday was Nov. 21, and nothing had been heard of the SLIGO up to a late hour last night. She is a canal schooner, and measures 399 tons. She was built at St. Catharines, by Shickluna, in 1860, and rebuilt in 1880. Her rating is A2, and value $10,000, Insured. Graham & Co., of St. Catharines, are the owners. The vessel carries a crew of nine men. (Daily Inter Ocean 1883/11/22 p5)

THE SLIGO SAFE. The schooner SLIGO, out from Vert Island, Lake Superior, since Nov. 7, arrived safely in Chicago yesterday. She is minus some of her canvas but otherwise is all right, and her crew are all well. (Daily Inter Ocean 1883/11/26 p5)
Voyage time to Chicago would vary greatly depending on time of year and always the winds and weather. Owing to the island locations of the quarry in Nipigon Bay, all the freighting of sandstone blocks as well as equipment and manpower employed at the quarry required transportation by vessel or barge operating during the spring, summer and fall months. In his book, *Schooner Passage*, author Theodore J. Karamanski has offered descriptions of sailing ships on the Great Lakes during frontier times. During the 1880s era of Vert Island quarry operations, schooners had an indispensable role for materials transportation, surviving many hair-raising experiences especially in November gales. A large sailing fleet of over 1,800 vessels still plied the Great Lakes during this era, however only a select group of schooners and captains worked the Lake Superior waters. Successful captains had the ability to get as much as possible out of their sailors and ships. They understood that they wouldn’t last long if mishaps occurred that kept their schooners off the Lake especially during the open navigation season.

*Route from Vert Island quarry, across Lake Superior, and along Lake Huron to Chicago (Partial Great Lakes Chart 14,600)*
In Chicago, Vert Island stone received many positive reviews. One of the most empathic shows of support came in the form of a paper read by William Le Barron Jenney before the Academy of Sciences in Chicago on 27 November 1883. In his speech he spoke about the properties of Vert Island stone that made it such an excellent choice for masonry building purposes.

Chicago is very rich in building-stone — in quantity, quality and variety. Lake Michigan and Lake Superior afford cheap transportation for the Vert Island sandstone of Canada, which is being used in the Royal Insurance Co.’s building... The Vert Island or McArthur red sandstone... for example, the Vert Island Red Sandstone and other kinds being the most friable of our building-stone. The diamond saws of the Young & Farrel Company will cut through about eight inches of the Vert Island stone per hour, while they will cut through thirty inches of Amherst stone in the same time...

It is of Old Red Sandstone or Potsdam formation, uniform in color, density and texture. The deposit is from 15 to 30 feet thick and covering 40 acres. It is a Liver Rock, showing no signs of stratification.

Home Insurance Building

W.L.B. Jenney not only praised the stone’s characteristics he also...
used it in many of his buildings. His most famous building was the Home Insurance building, built from 1884 to 1885. The image on the left shows the completed building with its later 1890 two-story addition added. The small inserted image shows original riveted steel connection and the portions of the brick, terra cotta and Vert Island stone that was used as cladding. This small portion of the building was saved during its demolition in 1929 and is still preserved at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. The image on the right is a copy of the original 1884 dimension stone contract drawing, signed by Young & Farrel. This drawing shows all the portions of the building that used Vert Island stone. It highlights the stones use in stringcourses between the floors, for all window ledges, the original stone parapet at the top, and for the elaborately carved balconies on the second and third floor.

The following is a description of the Troescher building (right) at the time of its opening in 1884.

*Top Right: 1884-1885, Troescher building Adler & Sullivan architects. Demolished in 1978 (Source, Authors’ Collection)*

*Bottom Right: Detail of carved Vert Island stone column that formed part of the cornice of the Troescher building. (Source, Art Institute of Chicago)*
The elegant new Troescher Block, never yet occupied, and offering undoubtedly the handsomest and finest accommodations on all Market street... It stands 79x90 feet, six stories and basement high, at 119-23 Market street, and is built of Verte Island brown stone, Anderson pressed brick, terra cotta, and cast iron, the great windows filled with plate glass. The first story is divided into four massive, deeply recessed arches of brown stone, one of the arches being devoted to the entrance, which is a very handsome feature in iron. Another particularly good effect is the cornice of terra cotta and stone... The building throughout has been constructed, after architects Adler and Sullivan’s plans, in most substantial manner... (Chicago Daily Inter Ocean, 1885/5/24 p10)

Built from 1885-1887 for the Phoenix Insurance Company, the building pictured above was designed by Burnham & Root architects. The entire first two floors were of Vert Island stone and the third was of alternating bands of brick and stone. The great variety of surface textures and carvings present in the main entrance of the building showed the potential that the stone had for decorative purposes. This entrance was praised in its day and in 1891, Montgomery Schuyler, a highly influential architectural critic gave the following opinion of it.
If beauty be its own excuse for being, this entrance needs no other, for assuredly it is one of the most beautiful and artistic works that American architecture has to show, so admirably proportioned it is, and so admirably detailed, so clear and emphatic without exaggeration in the expression of the structure, and so rich and refined the ornament... (Harpers New Monthly Magazine, “Glimpses of Western Architecture,” September 1891, 561)

Stone from the Vert Island quarry was chosen for the masonry piers of the new C.P.R. bridge over the Nipigon River. The stone was transported by tug and barge about eight miles from the quarry to an unloading dock just below the lower rapids, then by rail cart 500 yards to the bridge works. This image shows the stone masons yard on the west bank of the river near the first

Canadian Buildings and Structures

Above: CPR Bridge crossing the Nipigon River, built 1883-85. (TBHMS 984.104.24)
pier and a temporary tram-way to carry the finished stones across the river. The entire span including approaches were about 1,000 feet long with an elevation of some 90 feet up to grade.

Although Port Arthur was experiencing a building boom in the early 1880s due to the construction of the C.P.R., there was still not much demand for stone buildings. It was only after a disastrous fire in 1887, that Port Arthur received its first Vert Island building. The Cordingly Block was built in 1886 for Mr. C.A. Cordingly and designed by James A. Ellis. It was two stories and completely clad in Vert Island stone.

There were plans for other buildings to use the stone but the only other commercial block built was that for Mr. W.J. Clarke, druggist. Designed by James A. Ellis, it was a three-story business block, the first story was of Vert Island sandstone, and the 2nd and 3rd were composed of white brick trimmed with brown sandstone. Messrs. Haddon Bros., con-

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After Thomas Marks’ first house was destroyed by fire in 1887, he planned to rebuild in a grand style. Early designs for the house indicated the use of Vert Island stone. The stone was shipped to Port Arthur but the completed house only used it for a few courses at its base with the rest being done in brick and wood.

Vert Island sandstone was used for the Port Arthur Post Office by Mr. Tobin, the government contractor. The quarry had been idle for four years but a large amount of cut stone was still available at the island providing a windfall opportunity.

Monuments

Pictured on the following page is T.C. Guerard’s own monument at St. St. Andrews Cemetery. Many of the graveyard monuments produced by the Port Arthur Marble Works can still be seen in St. Andrew’s and Riverside cemeteries. This monument was described in an article published in the Port Arthur Daily Sentinel.

The whole of this handsome monument, with the exception of a marble inscription shield on the four sides of the die, is made of Verte Island sandstone which has an attractive reddish tint and is as hard and endurable as the best specimen of granite.

The firm have facilities for manufacturing monuments of either sandstone, granite or marble. The former is supplied by Gen. McArthur of Verte Island...” (Port Arthur Daily Sentinel 21 July 1885, p. 3)
The decline of the Vert Island quarry has often been attributed both at the time and in later studies to the McKinley tariffs that came into effect on 1 November 1890. Quarry operation, however, essentially stopped at the close of the 1888 season. The last thing that happened that season was the sinking of the steamer, CITY of MONTREAL and the partial wreck of the schooner KEE-WATIN. This was just another of the multiple shipping disasters that the company endured over the course of the 1880s. It seems that this was the final straw for the
other partners of the company. For although McArthur is recorded as being at Vert Island in the spring of 1889 there is no evidence that any shipments were made that year. One final proof of this view was given in a 1933 biography of McArthur, “…the Chicago and Vert Island (Lake Superior) Stone Company, succumbed to two successive ship disasters in the early eighties.” (Dictionary of American Biography, v11, 1933, 550-52) However, General McArthur himself did not give up all hope that someday operations could be restarted. He was still listed as a quarry owner until 1892 in Chicago directories and remained active in the Quarry Owners’ Association of Chicago. In 1889 and again in 1890, General McArthur placed ads in quarry association journals seeking new financial partners to continue operations. None were found, however, and time would be as deadly to his hopes as lack of money. In 1893 the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago helped create a resurgence of classical architecture in America and with it a demand for lighter coloured stones. The increasing use of steel skeletal construction and lighter cladding materials also resulted in less demand for masonry in commercial buildings. While stone was still favoured for residential buildings, politics would complicate its application. The McKinley tariff was the most publicized aspect of the increasingly protectionist environment in the United States, however it was not the only factor. Newspaper articles mention that there was a powerful movement in the America quarry industry and Vert Island was mentioned as one of the foreign stones being shut out of the market. Additionally, the company could not count on finding an easier time in Canada. When Vert Island stone was marketed in both Winnipeg and Toronto it faced stiff opposition from established stone suppliers. The best example of the opposition that local quarry owners created is the Winnipeg Post Office, built from 1884-86. Initially the Department of Public Works selected Vert Island stone but the local Tyndale stone industry was effective in having it removed from the project. An editorial from that time gives some idea of the rhetoric that was used to create an unfavourable domestic market for Vert Island stone.

“…I believe not only in ‘Canada for the Canadians,’ but also in Manitoba for the Manitobans. In fact an effort should be made when the Minister of Public Works comes here this month, to have Selkirk stone used in the new
post office instead of stone from Nipigon as proposed. It would keep at least $20,000 in the city, and the building would be the better for the change...” (Winnipeg Daily Tribune, 11 August 1884, p. 5)

Although it is tempting to look at the story of the Vert Island quarry as that of a failed business venture, it would be a mistake to do so. For the stone from this tiny island on Lake Superior traveled by sail and steamer vessels to many places in the great lakes basin and was employed by some of the leading architects of the day. The quarry now sat silent, with huge amounts of cut stone still piled neatly on the docks awaiting ships that would not come until the last years of the 1890s and the next part of this story.

Today

The original outcrop of sandstone, although depleted by operations during the 1880s of approximately 200,000 cubic feet of quality stone, appears robust and intact with obvious quantities of potential stone still available. At time of writing, the quarry remains as privately owned patented land surrounded by a newly established Federal Marine Park in 2007. Most of the original footprints of buildings and installed equipment have been overgrown or erased with time. Some mechanical equipment was relocated to other area quarries during the early 1900s, while most remaining parts have disappeared over time. No marketable cut dimension stone remains at the site and all docks have deteriorated and remain unusable.

Notes

Every effort has been made to present this first episode in a historically accurate fashion. Reference pools of information have been collected and compiled for use in this work over a fifteen year period.

In Chicago: Chicago Art Institute, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago Public Library, and newspapers including, Chicago Daily Tribune, and Daily Inter Ocean

In Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, Brodie Public Library, City Archives, Lakehead University, Ministry of Northern Mines and newspapers including Daily Sentinel, and Weekly Herald.

In Toronto: Ontario Archives, Toronto Metropolitan Library, (U of T) Robarts Library, and newspapers including, Globe.


In Ottawa: National Archives Canada.

In Nipigon: Nipigon Museum, and site visits to Vert Island quarry
### Appendix I: Chronology of Vert Island quarry active operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Duncan McEachen stakes a quarry location on Vert Island. Lot surveyed by John Jones on August 10, and a patent granted to Charles C. Cummings on September 9, 1881.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>C.M. Cummings and Co. of Chicago begins work on the property with a dozen men in late April. During the summer they construct two piers, one 30ft. x 100ft. with a larger cribwork dock in 13 feet of water; a double tramway with derricks at each end and buildings. From April to June the company spends $8,000 on labour and machinery. The quarry is located about 250 feet from loading dock. By mid-summer 25 men are employed. Yearly production reported as 15,000 cubic feet. The stone sells for $1.25 to $1.75 per cubic foot. One cargo of sandstone weekly is planned. The schooner LADY DUFFERIN arrived in Chicago on August 24 with a load of 500 tons of stone. By the end of the year 700 tons of stone have been shipped to Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>The corporation is now referred to as the Chicago &amp; Vert Island Lake Superior Brown Stone Co. and Charles M. Cummings remains a major shareholder. A large boarding house and a blacksmith shop are built at the quarry. A post office is established. Two steam “Channel” drills arrive to cut stone into marketable shapes for shipping. 25 men continue work in the quarry and 10 to 15 men are expected. The company reports numerous orders for the stone. Production increases to 30,000 cubic feet. Schooner SLIGO transports 3 loads to Chicago, from August to late November.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Company name changes to Chicago &amp; Vert Island Stone Company. Quarry workforce increases to 50 men. Production increases to 50,000 cubic feet. By late November, twelve cargoes of sandstone have been shipped to Chicago. The stone is now advertised for sale in Winnipeg. Loads are also supplied to CPR for construction of the Nepegon Bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Operations at Vert stone quarries continue through the winter. 300 tons of stone is hauled over the ice to the CPR at Red Rock for shipment to Winnipeg. Production reported as 40,000 cubic feet. By late November six loads of stone have been shipped by schooners to Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Quarry operations continue with a workforce of 40 to 50. A 15-ton derrick and a new dock enable the loading of two vessels at a time. Production reduces to 25,000 cubic feet to manage labour disruptions in Chicago. Steamer NEPIGON carries 700 tons of stone to Chicago in May. By late November seven loads have been sent by steamer and schooner to Chicago. One load has been shipped to Port Arthur. Post office closes in December for winter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1887 Chicago stone quarry owners and cut stone contractors organize in the spring to control the industry and restrict imports. Quarry production shrinks to 9,000 cubic feet. Only four loads shipped: one to Toronto, one to Cleveland, and two to Port Arthur. The stone now subject to a duty of $1 per ton in the United States, still sells in Chicago at $1.25 per cubic foot. It can be delivered in Toronto at $1 per cubic foot.

1888 The quarry continues operation with General John McArthur of Chicago in charge and 30 workers. Quarry production reported as 25,000 cubic feet. Seven loads are shipped, two loads to Port Arthur, four to Chicago, and one to Cleveland.

Appendix II: Chronology of shipping disasters and the Vert Island quarry in brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 May 1884</td>
<td>Prop. J.S. SEAVERNS sinks in Michipicoten harbour; cargo includes $11,626 worth of supplies consigned to John McArthur for Vert Is. quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 September 1884</td>
<td>Schr. JOHN BIGLER sinks near Huron Islands, Lake Superior, with a load of Vert Is. stone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 October 1884</td>
<td>Schr. LADY DUFFERIN wrecks off Cariboo Is, Lake Superior, carrying a load of Vert Is. Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May 1885</td>
<td>Schr. MARY L. HIGGIE arrives in Chicago with a load of Vert Is. stone. She left Vert Island on November 28, 1884 and was forced to winter in Sault Ste. Marie after losing most of her canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 June 1886</td>
<td>Stmr. NEPIGON arrives at Chicago with stone from Vert Island. It is seized for 5 days by the American government for customs violations. When released it is unloaded, dry docked for hull repairs, then returns to Vert Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June 1886</td>
<td>Schr. JOHN RABER arrives in Chicago in sinking condition and goes into dry dock after her stone cargo is removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November 1886</td>
<td>Stmr. CITY of MONTREAL is damaged including the dock while unloading stone at Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 October 1888</td>
<td>Stmr. CITY of MONTREAL wrecks off Michipicoten Island, Lake Superior. Her consort, KEEWATIN, breaks loose and grounds on Grand Island, Michigan, the next day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As much as history repeats itself, just as often historians who are creating it venture down new and untrodden paths; this is a story that does precisely that. For well over four decades, historians have contended that the provincial governments in Canada, particularly in Ontario, bent over backwards to assist pulp and paper industrialists as they began establishing their enterprises. The literature has generally argued that, although elected officials literally handed over Crown (or public) resources such as timber and water powers to the business interests for a fraction of what these assets were worth, the politicians were motivated by the desire to facilitate the development of stable hinterland resource communities whose pulp and paper mills were as strong as possible.

Many towns and cities in northern Ontario probably wished that it had been so, even if it meant that the public purse would have suffered in the process. For the evidence indicates that there were many compelling reasons for the provincial government to have been generally disinclined to assist the new breed of pulp and paper makers when they began knocking on its door around the turn of the twentieth century to gain access to the wood and energy supplies they sought. These factors have been detailed elsewhere, so only a few of the most important will be concisely summarized here.

Political patronage was arguably the primary factor that explains the government’s behaviour towards the industry. The government viewed its ability to distribute Crown resources first and foremost as a golden opportunity to reward its allies and friends and realize its political goals; the aim in these instances was not the rational
distribution of timber and water powers.

In addition, another central force that drove the Ontario government’s treatment of the new breed of pulp and paper industrialists was the politicians’ drive to realize its other goals in the hinterland, principally colonization. Very early in the process of pushing large-scale grain farming in northern Ontario the politicians realized that, despite their Herculean publicity campaign, this would only ever be a chimerical dream. At the same time, they recognized—at least privately—that the only way to tie people to “New Ontario” was to generate a robust market for the only crop northerners would be able to harvest aplenty, the spruce pulpwood that grew on their homesteads and in the surrounding forest. To achieve this aim, and notwithstanding a law that ostensibly prohibited the export of raw pulpwood from the province, the government promoted the sale of settlers’ spruce to the Americans. This left Ontario as a glaring anomaly in eastern Canada. It was the only jurisdiction that controlled a significant supply of spruce whose annual exports of that product rose dramatically during the first third of the twentieth century. At the same time, the provincial government understood that granting pulp and paper mills in Ontario the volumes of wood they sought would damage the market for settlers’ pulpwood. Mills requested that the government grant them enough fibre to supply their industries in perpetuity, whereby they would control all the wood they ever needed; this was crucial to attracting investors to their enterprises. In contrast, the government aimed to create a situation in which the province’s mills competed with American buyers for the settlers’ spruce, a scenario that could only be realized by not catering to Ontario’s pulp and paper makers’ requests for resources.

To be sure, there were occasions when radically different conditions prevailed. These were the extraordinary instances when elected officials reached out to a few pulp and paper makers and warmly embraced them. But the former only did so when it so was politically expedient, and during at
least the industry’s first forty years of existence in northern Ontario (it arrived in 1894) these occasions were glaring exceptions.

The nascent years in the existence of the Lakehead’s first pulp and paper maker, Port Arthur Pulp and Paper Company, provide a compelling example to illustrate these dynamics at work. In the midst of the First World War, a group of American and Canadian fine paper makers hatched a plan to secure a more cost effective source of sulphite pulp at the Lakehead by constructing a mill there. In the process, they requested that the Ontario government provide them with a pulpwood “concession” (i.e., large tract of forest) to support their venture. The politicians had other priorities, however, which left the firm in a quandary. Port Arthur Pulp would construct its new mill in short order but it was left without a secure source of fibre to supply the plant’s operation. For the next few years the company desperately strove to obtain pulpwood—largely from settlers—to sustain its operation. And then the ground shifted beneath the company’s feet in a manner that changed its fortunes forever. Literally overnight it was able to manoeuvre itself such that the Ontario government actually ended up needing it just as much as—if not more than—it needed the politicians. The upshot saw the Ontario government take dramatic steps to ensure that Port Arthur Pulp was supplied with far more spruce by the early 1920s than any of the Lakehead’s other existing pulp and paper companies.

A number of factors surrounding the manufacture of pulp and paper in North America coalesced during the late 1800s to unleash a revolution in this industry. These included the rapidly growing literacy rate and explosion in the number of newspapers being read across the continent, and the concomitant need to find a more plentiful supply of raw material with which to make newsprint. In the meantime, the industry converted its operations from processing rags and other materials to making paper from crushed or “pulped” logs. Very quickly, producers realized that spruce—both black and white but especially the former—was the best species for making newsprint and sulphite pulp (from which a variety of other papers were made) because of its naturally white and strong fibrous components. In addition, technological advances in the pulp and paper industry allowed the productive capacity of mills to increase exponentially, thereby necessitating the supply of
ever larger quantities of power—usually harnessed from significant waterfalls in large rivers—to run them. Moreover, the industry was concentrated in the areas of North America that had historically boasted the largest population concentrations in the United States and Canada, namely the northeast (i.e., New York State and the New England states and Quebec). During the last half of the nineteenth century, however, the American mid-west enjoyed exponential growth, and cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Minneapolis rose to become major metropolises. Finally, wood products in general and newsprint in particular are bulky and cheap relative to their weight and volume, and this reality has made the location of the trees to be harvested and the attendant cost of delivering them in their processed form to market the critical factors in determining the economic viability of exploiting particular forests. As a result, other things being equal, woodlands closest to markets were harvested first. Furthermore, producers that could utilize ships instead of railways to transport their goods enjoyed significant competitive advantages.  

All these forces made northern Ontario in general and the Thunder Bay District in particular practically irresistible locations in which to establish the pulp and paper industry as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The province’s hinterland was blessed with prodigious supplies of the requisite spruce trees and sizeable water powers, and it was also much closer to the burgeoning populations of the mid-western United States than the existing pulp and paper mills farther east. These factors help explain why the Ontario government was deluged with applications from pulp and paper makers for Crown timber and water power resources in the mid- to late 1890s to support the new production facilities they wished to establish in the province’s northern reaches. So, too, does the fact that mills could be built on the shores of the Great Lakes, thereby lowering their costs for both receiving raw materials (such as sulphur) by boat and for transporting their finished goods to market. In all these regards the Thunder Bay District was particularly well endowed, and industry analysts continually lauded its truly unlimited potential to become the epicentre for the province’s pulp and paper industry.  

But for years the Ontario government was reluctant to facilitate this process. True, the Liberal government that ruled the province until 1905 had granted a lease to the pulpwood in the Lake Nipigon
watershed to a group of industrialists in 1895 (Map 1). They faced difficulties in securing permission to develop the water powers on the Nipigon River, however, and this delayed the project until the turn of the century. At that point, John R. Barber, an iconic pioneer in the Canadian pulp and paper industry, joined the enterprise, and by the early 1900s his group was ready to begin construction of its mill. But when the Conservatives won power in 1905, they bewilderingly declared the pulpwod in practically the entire Nipigon watershed to be a “reserve,” rendering it basically off-limits to paper makers (the Tories even prevented the men at the Hudson’s Bay Company’s post at Nipigon House from cutting firewood inside the reserve!). Then in 1906, the Conservatives cancelled the lease to the pulpwod in the Nipigon watershed and refused to sell any of it before they left office in 1919 despite a string of applications from bona fide mill developers for this wood. In many respects, the government’s approach to administering the timber in this location reflected its general
disinclination to facilitate the pulp and paper makers’ plans across the province. Nevertheless, the potent allure of northern Ontario’s spruce and water power resources, and their proximity to the mid-western American market, drew a steady parade of pulp and paper entrepreneurs who lobbied the provincial government for resources to support their mill plans, particularly at the Lakehead. Rumours swirled in the local papers in both Port Arthur and Fort William and in the *Pulp and Paper Magazine of Canada* during the mid-1910s about a number of new pulp and paper projects that were slated for these cities. The Conservatives did tender the Pic River pulpwood concession in 1916, but they handled the sale in a manner that denied this timber to the party that actually needed it and instead delivered it to an interest which had never even asked for it.

A remarkably similar series of events occurred when the Ontario government sold the Black Sturgeon River pulpwood concession later that same year, and this was the point at which the Port Arthur Pulp and Paper Company entered the scene. In the fall of 1916, the owners of several fine paper mills in both western Michigan and southern Ontario—the latter were organized under the banner of Provincial Paper Mills Company, Limited—applied to the Conservatives for a 940-square-mile tract of timber that was centred on the Black Sturgeon River watershed south of Lake Nipigon. In exchange for obtaining a lease to this fibre supply and paying a relatively high price for it, the industrialists agreed to erect immediately a 50-ton sulphite pulp mill in Port Arthur and enlarge it to 150 tons or more when conditions warranted. G. Howard Ferguson, Ontario’s Minister of Lands and Forests at the time, decided to tender the tract and not grant it privately to any interest. This pulpwood concession contained a rich supply of spruce, much of which could be driven directly to Lake Superior and then towed a short distance to the Lakehead. Moreover, there was an enormous pent-up demand from mill developers for a large tract of pulpwood in the Thunder Bay District. As a result, the government was deluged with inquiries about the Black Sturgeon concession from across the northeastern United States and Canada.

Although Port Arthur Pulp had a shovel-ready project and the enterprise was backed by bona fide pulp and paper makers, Ferguson arbitrarily decided to award the Black Sturgeon pulpwood to an-
other party. Prior to tendering any timber, it was essential that the government know the volume and species of trees it was selling. This information would form the basis for evaluating objectively the bids for the wood. In this instance, the government’s local Crown Timber Agent assured Ferguson that their personnel could “cruise” (i.e., evaluate and estimate) the timber available on the Black Sturgeon concession. The government decided, however, that it did not need this detailed information and instead that “a general idea of the pulpwood” was all that was required. It is unclear how the minister converted this superficial impression into precise data, but he nevertheless used it to determine in early 1917 that Port Arthur Pulp did not win this timber.  

This decision left the firm in a predicament, one that the government showed little interest in addressing. Port Arthur Pulp had assumed that it would obtain a lease to this pulpwood concession, so it had begun building its new mill and was ready to begin production by the fall of 1917 (Image 1). But it did not have enough pulpwood to supply its plant because it had not been able to purchase enough settlers’ spruce on the open market (this was a period during which the export trade in pulpwood from Ontario expanded dramatically—most of it coming from the
Thunder Bay District—and there was a general labour shortage due to the war). The company’s officials repeatedly lobbied the government for licences to cut pulpwood from a few small, local tracts of timber (one was “Sibley,” south of Lake Nipigon, and the other was due west of Hele Township), but to no avail (Map 1).

The remarkable part about this situation was the degree to which the government’s own officials were so profoundly committed to assisting Port Arthur Pulp in particular and other mill developers in general. Albert Grigg, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests, pleaded with his political masters to give Port Arthur Pulp every consideration. As Grigg put it, he had a thorough understanding of the firm’s situation and was “convinced that unless cutting rights... are given to the pulp company, they will not be able to operate during the coming season.”

James Oliver, the Crown Timber Agent for Port Arthur and that city’s former mayor and president of its board of trade, was far more outspoken on this subject. He had toiled for years to draw the pulp and paper industry to his bailiwick, most recently working with his forest rangers to cruise the timber available in the Thunder Bay District, sending their reports to headquarters in Toronto, and beseeching the minister to offer the wood for sale to mill developers. In response, the ruling Conservatives would typically tell him “not to do anything.” By the fall of 1917, with Port Arthur Pulp in crisis, Oliver was at wit’s end. He reminded Minister Ferguson that the townships fronting on Lake Superior between his city and the Nipigon River had all been opened up to settlement, and were thus unavailable for sale to mill developers (Map 1). He added that the locals at the Lakehead were getting restless over the situation and that the minister would be well advised to remedy Port Arthur Pulp’s fibre problem.

Ferguson was arguably his generation’s most savvy and cunning politician, and Oliver’s warning about potential political fall-out from the minister’s handling of this file resonated with Ferguson, but not that loudly. The minister did grant Port Arthur Pulp a one-year permit to harvest a limited volume of pulpwood in the area just west of Hele Township, and in late 1917 it won the tender for a licence to the Sibley Forest Reserve (Map 1). These were merely short term solutions, however, as the firm still lacked a secure, long-term source of fibre.

Port Arthur Pulp soldiered on for the next few years, and then
suddenly its world was turned upside down, for the better; its experience in this regard underscores how quickly a mill’s fortunes could change on those rare occasions when it became advantageous for the Ontario government to shower a firm with largesse. Port Arthur Pulp’s moment in the sun began when the upstart United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) gained office in 1919. They agreed to sell a licence to the 72-square-mile tract of timber for which the company had asked a few years earlier. The problem was that Port Arthur Pulp bid on the wood at a time of rampant inflation and intense competition; although it won the bidding the price it paid for the fibre made it too expense to harvest.

Then Port Arthur Pulp went on the attack, propitiously just at the right time. It began lobbying the government for a large pulpwood concession – just over 1,200 square miles in size – that fronted on Lake Nipigon and stretched roughly 60 miles east from the Nipigon River to the Aquasabon River; it would be called “the Nipigon concession” (Map 1). In doing so, the company, which was renamed Provincial Paper Mills, Limited, in 1920, leaned on the government in a most strategic way. First, Provincial Paper warned the country’s leading magazines that it would soon be cutting off their supply of paper, a threat that the anxious president of Saturday Night relayed to E.C. Drury, Ontario’s premier. Next, and far more importantly, Provincial Paper offered to help the UFO solve one of the government’s most vexing problems. For the longest time, Ontario’s Department of Education had encountered serious difficulties in obtaining an adequate supply of book paper at a reasonable price, and a federal royal commission into the problem in the midst of the First World War was unable to improve the situation. This state of affairs grew even more critical after the conflict when the newly-minted UFO government pledged to provide all the province’s elementary and secondary students with free textbooks. All eyes then turned to Provincial Paper, which enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the production of book paper in Canada at the time. Recognizing the extraordinary leverage it could exercise by virtue of these circumstances, Provincial Paper offered the Ontario government a quid pro quo that the latter could not possibly refuse; a guaranteed supply of book paper at a fair price in exchange for a lease to the Nipigon concession.

The UFO was equally committed to making the deal but also at the same time preserving the air of
propriety surrounding it. First, this required that the government tender the timber limit and not grant it privately; at the time the UFO was in the process of excoriating the previous regime for having abused its control over Crown timber and was not about to be tarred with the same brush. But when it came to drawing up the conditions that would govern the tender, Beniah Bowman, the UFO’s Minister of Lands and Forests, had a few tricks up his sleeve. He ensured that Provincial Paper would be the only firm that would be able to bid on the wood by allowing the company’s officials to write the terms of sale. Understandably, the tender obliged all bidders for the timber to operate pulp and “fine” paper mills which produced “a quality of paper equivalent to that now in use in publication of school books by the Department of Education.” It was common knowledge at the time that no other mill in the region—and several were already operating by this time—was geared toward manufacturing this product; they were all oriented to churn out groundwood pulp and/or newsprint. James E. Day, an industrialist who was lobbying for the UFO to sell him a pulpwood concession centred on the Nagagami River watershed at this time, was disgusted when the government would not accord him the same privilege it had clearly given this other suitor for timber. “The Nipigon Limit was put up at the request of the Provincial Paper Mills,” Day complained to Bowman, “and the conditions were deliberately and properly framed … [for] the industry they wanted, namely, book paper.” To no one’s surprise, Provincial Paper submitted the only bid for the Nipigon Concession. ¹⁷

Moreover, the UFO continued to offer the firm its deepest support thereafter. It gave Provincial Paper practically complete freedom to draw up the terms for the pulpwood lease it would sign with the government, an opportunity on which the company fully capitalized. For example, virtually every other lease of this kind had called for the construction of new mills or the expansion of existing ones. Provincial Paper’s...
lawyers ensured that their client’s agreement merely obliged the enterprise to “operate” its existing facilities. Moreover, the company was not obliged to harvest any timber from its prime new concession (it would not for over one decade) even though its application for the pulpwood rested on its pressing need for a large new spruce supply. Remarkably, the firm’s solicitors took so long to get the document honed to their liking that the government agreed to back-date it so that no suspicions were aroused.\(^{18}\)

While Provincial Paper would continue to be the exception at the Lakehead (in the Nipigon area) over the next decade—it enjoyed the government’s favour whereas the handful of other local newsprint mills did not—looking at that chapter in the story takes this tale too far ahead. Examining the circumstances surrounding the establishment and early years of Provincial Paper’s mill in Port Arthur demonstrates the degree to which its development was shaped by a government that only rarely reached out to assist the province’s pioneering pulp and paper makers. Although historians have heretofore portrayed G. Howard Ferguson as arguably the industry’s greatest champion during its nascent years in Ontario, the evidence does not support this view. Provincial Paper—among a long list of other interests\(^ {19}\)—learned this lesson first-hand during Ferguson’s term as Minister of Lands and Forests (1914-1919), when the company could barely sustain its operation for lack of pulpwood. Moreover, the mill the firm built—originally under the banner of Port Arthur Pulp and Paper Company—stands as one of several examples of pulp and paper enterprises that were established in the province during the 1910s that began producing before they acquired a large pulpwood concession from the Ontario government. For instance, the pulp and paper plant in Fort Frances, which was established in 1914, waited nearly three decades for the provincial politicians to lease it its first significant fibre supply! Fortunately for Port Arthur Pulp, it did not have to wait nearly as long because a conjunction of factors positioned it precisely into a niche that the Ontario government desperately sought to fill. Thereafter, the politicians delivered a bounty of resources and privileges unto the company, an approach that must have made the district’s other pulp and paper makers green with envy. Ultimately, recounting the early years of the Port Arthur Pulp and Paper Company reminds us
of the need to continue delving into the history of Ontario’s forest industry, an endeavour that is not only rewarding but may also lead us into new and uncharted waters.

Acknowledgements

This article is drawn from my major study which examined the early history of relations between Ontario’s government and its pulp and paper makers in particular and between the provincial state and the other suitors for the province’s timber and water power resources in general. Many persons supported that undertaking, many of whom reside in Thunder Bay. Tory Tronrud, the curator/archivist at the Thunder Bay Museum, has been invaluable in facilitating my research. The same can be said of my forester friends at the Lakehead, including Malcolm “Mac” Squires, Paul Poschmann, Tom Ratz and Bill Smith. They were all former clients during my treeplanting days up the Spruce River Road and in the former Abitibi’s freehold lands, and it is always a pleasure to reminisce with them about the less intellectual activities that went on in our bush camps. This article is dedicated to the many folks who worked in the woods and at the handful of pulp and paper mills that used to operate at the Lakehead but are now long gone. May they know that I and other people like me are working diligently to ensure that their histories will never be forgotten.

Endnotes


2 This story is covered in great detail in M. Kuhlberg, In the Power of the Government: The Rise and Fall of Newsprint in Ontario, 1894-1932 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

3 M. Kuhlberg, “Pulpwood is the Only Thing We Do Export: The Myth of Provincial Protection-
ism in Ontario’s Forest Industry, 1890-1930,” in Andrew Smith and Dimitry Anastakis, eds., *Smart Globalization: The Canadian Business and Economic History Experience* (University of Toronto Press, 2014). Remarkably, the Ontario government continued to facilitate the export of large volumes of spruce pulpwood from Ontario until at least the 1960s.

4 Other factors include the government’s need to cater to other resource supplicants and not simply newsprint producers, Ontarians’ agrarian roots and its anti-corporate bias during an era of the “robber barons,” the dangers inherent in appearing as an ally of corporate interests, the difficulty in meeting the pulp and paper industry’s requests because of their enormous scope, and patronage considerations, a concept which industry never seemed to grasp because it had such a different conception of how relations between government and business ought to be structured.


6 Ibid., 66-67 and 122-23. The Tories’ fifteen years in office (1905-1919) saw relatively little capacity added to Ontario’s pulp and paper industry. Authors such as Nelles, *The Politics of Development*, ch. 10, blame this lack of activity on extra-provincial factors, such as the tight financial markets caused by the First World War. This explanation ignores the dozens of applications the Tories received—and rejected—from genuine pulp and paper makers during the 1910s in general and the Great War in particular, all asking for the government to sell pulpwood to support new mills: AO, RG1-246-3, 3732, Vol. 1, contains a plethora of such requests. Moreover, the Ontario Department of Lands, Forests and Mines’ *Annual Report* for 1916, xii, even boasted about the “constant inquiries being made with respect to pulp bearing lands in the Province of Ontario.”

7 PPMC, 15 October 1916, passim; Kuhlberg, *In the Power of the Government*, Section II.

8 Kuhlberg, *In the Power of the Government*, Ch. 3.

9 This department was known as the Department of Lands, Forests and Mines during the Tories’ time in office, but for simplicity it will be referred to by the name—the Department of Lands and Forests—it had for practically its entire existence.

10 AO, RG1-246-3, 9457, vol. 1, inquiries sent to government between November 1916 and January 1917.

11 Kuhlberg, *In the Power of the Government*, 124; the citation is from AO, RG1-246-3, 9457, vol. 1, 18 October 1916, A. Grigg to L.E. Bliss.

12 AO, RG1-246-3, 18284, vol. 1, 29 October 1917, Memorandum for the Minister from A. Grigg.


14 Ibid., 127; PPMC, 20 December 1917, 1224.


16 Ibid., 179.

17 AO, RG1-E-4-B, 21 October 1920, Conditions with Respect to the Nipigon Pulp and Pine Limit 1920; Ibid., RG1-246-3, 21973, vol. 1, 18 April 1921, J.E. Day to B. Bowman;


19 In the early 1920s, one particularly frustrated pulp and paper advocate decried, in reference to Ferguson’s years as minister, that the client for whom he was acting “could never get any action from the old Government;” AO, RG1-246-3, vol. 1, 18 April 1921, J.E. Day to B. Bowman.
The Lakehead before the First World War was the linchpin of the nation’s prosperity. Its docks, rail yards, freight sheds and grain elevators transformed the harbour into a transshipment complex to serve the Wheat Boom before 1914 and the movement of goods and peoples across Canada. These intense boom years, 1907 to 1913, saw a parallel expansion of the region’s resources sectors; an increased number of farming forestry and mining operations.

The middle class in the twin cities was understandably optimistic about their future prospects. Signs of economic progress were undeniable. The cities had a diversified economy: factories, hydro-electric power, telephone service, new suburbs, street railway and an improving infrastructure.

Immigrants supplied labour for the boom. Theirs were lives of hard work for low wages. Sequestered in unhealthy ethnic enclaves, they were isolated by language, mistrust and misunderstanding. Exploitation of immigrant labour contributed to severe wealth inequality.¹

Inequality was more than a social problem for it promoted a
“loss of social cohesion,” which is the “greatest threat to the health of a democracy.” Without equality, a community loses all sense of the fraternity that is necessary if it is to have a “common purpose and mutual dependence.”

Social and industrial discord erupted in violence in Fort William’s immigrant enclave known as the coal docks. In 1906 gunfire was exchanged between immigrant labourers and the CPR police force when the company used strikebreakers. A 1909 strike was a violent and bloody affair that led to a riot. Foreign-born workers were pitted against city police and military force.

The response of the Methodist Church to those shocking events was to establish an urban mission called Wesley Institute in the coal docks. Wesley Institute (also known as Wayside House) was largely the creation of the Reverend James M. Shaver. His settlement experience and his social and economic ideas guided the work of the mission from 1912 to 1921. This article will examine the education, recreation, and social programs of Wesley Institute for immigrant adults and children in the ethnic enclave. These programs sought to promote Canadianization, citizenship, democratic values, participation in Canadian society, social change and understanding in a city divided by ethnicity and social class.

The 1909 strike was traumatic for Fort William. There was conflicting public opinion on the
social issues concerning foreigners (the term for non-English-speaking immigrants at the time) who were one third of the population. Hiram Hull became pastor of Wesley Methodist Church as the strike played out on the streets of the coal docks section of Fort William. He was compelled by the plight of the city’s working class immigrants to deliver a “stirring sermon in which he pointed out that the Canadian people of Fort William must meet these strangers kindly and with their highest character as leaders, or it would be worse for the city.”

Young people in the Church’s Epworth League “caught the spirit.” Led by Ira N. Gerry, they proposed building an urban mission. “Wesley Institute was conceived in the social passion of the great strike and riot of 1909.”

That social passion was born of the social gospel movement that promoted social reform. It valued social service as a moral activity and sought to include working Canadians in a Protestant evangelical popular culture and the wider democratic society. The Methodist Church’s decentralized structure made local congregations in small towns and cities the life force of the social gospel movement.

The young people of Wesley Methodist church were “unsure about how to proceed” but they were motivated by optimism and faith. They raised $5,100 and eventually purchased a poolroom and a four-room shack behind it in a strategic location at 704-706 McTavish Street in the coal docks. By 1911 Hiram Hull was able to hire a missionary worker. On good advice he hired the Rev. James M. Shaver. Due to a technicality, Shaver did not begin his missionary work in Fort William until 1912. However, in 1911 he spent his vacation in the city conducting a census in the foreign quarter.

James M. Shaver was born 26 November 1876 in the village of Finch near Cornwall, Ontario. He
was the fifth of six children born to William Herman Shaver and Catherine McMillan. Educated in Morrisburg Collegiate, James taught for two years before joining the ministry of the Methodist Church in 1899. His church probationary work took him first to Anticosti Island then, in 1901, to Pembroke, Ontario, and finally, in 1902, at St. Agnes, Quebec. After being granted special ordination at Pembroke, Shaver served as pastor at Portsmouth, Ontario and attended nearby Queen’s University. In 1908, he began theology studies at Victoria College, Toronto. He graduated in 1910 and married Elizabeth Catherine Asselstine. They had two sons; William Herman and Michael John Victor (Jack), both of whom became United Church ministers. James Shaver died in Winnipeg 13 June 1948; he was 72.

By the time Shaver attended Victoria College he was 32 years old and committed to mission work that involved “aggressive evangelism.” This must have seemed natural for Shaver who, at age 16, experienced a religious revival type of intense religious conversion. Historian Sara Burke believes “Shaver maintained the convictions of his youth, continuing to equate the reform of society with the individual’s redemption through Christ.”

He was among the twelve Victoria College “boys” the Methodist Church sent to do a house-by-house survey of “the ward,” Toronto’s downtown slum. They reported on the appalling filth, destitution and moral rot of the district. Shaver, as chairman for “aggressive evangelism,” organized students to follow up the survey with preaching on street corners, and tents, visiting saloons and praying in immigrant’s homes. While they wanted to save souls and bring the poor to the Methodist Church, the students also gained knowledge about the district’s social problems.

Shaver found himself drawn to the social issues of the slums. He took a leadership role at the Victoria College YMCA, conducted Sunday afternoon classes at the Y on “City Problems,” and encouraged the creation of a settlement house to assist foreigners to settle in Canada.

Together, with University of Toronto president, Robert Falconer, James Shaver planned University Settlement House in 1909. In the summer of 1910 he was appointed resident secretary of the settlement house. Shaver and his wife E.C. Shaver (nee Asselstine) moved into the three story renovated house on Adelaide Street West that included living
quarters and public rooms. Volunteers worked with large families of working people offering some medical help, English language classes and alternatives to dangerous and illegal entertainments.

The Shavers were frustrated by this experience because the goals of University Settlement were unclear. Robert Falconer and the board saw it as a source of social research and community social work that could be linked to the research work of the university. J. M. Shaver saw it as a mission to achieve “spiritual and social renewal.” The building of neighbourhood friendships and community social work became for Shaver spiritual work. It was a form of evangelism. However the board’s vision for the project was vague and without direction; the staff was unsure of its objectives since there was “no common vision.”

The University Settlement experience revealed two things; settlement workers needed to have well understood goals and the scientific study of local social conditions was not directly relevant to the interaction with newcomers in the community. Befriending local people by volunteers was work separate from social research. Shaver had come to understand that personal friendship and community engagement and social reform was spiritual work. Gone was the aggressive evangelism and blatant proselytization.

The offer of mission work in Fort William provided the opportunity Shaver needed to make a new start. Here he could lead a project with clear social goals using methods appropriate to local conditions based on his social and economic ideas.

**Economic and Social Views**

James Shaver saw the economic system as unfair and undemocratic. In its grip was one million foreigners who had recently escaped “penury and serfdom” in Europe only to find that in Canada they were still within its grasp. In Fort William he observed Canadian business methods in practice. At the waterfront coal handling plants and freight sheds, labourers gathered every morning. “If not picked the men moved on to the next plant in hopes of work,” said Shaver. “The employer has no responsibility for the worker and the employee has no loyalty to the
employee.” The system impoverished and marginalized immigrants who were treated as a commodity.

Shaver explained the capitalist economic system this way. Economic wealth depends upon abundant resources, capital and labour. Canada had the first two but lacked the third component of this trinity. This need was filled by the great migration of Slavs and Italians. Immigrant labour is necessary to create wealth; the immigrant is here “because he fits in the economic system.” Ideally there should be a healthy balance between resources, capital and labour. However, the immigrant is used as a strikebreaker and in order to survive accepts lower wages and poorer living conditions than the Canadian would tolerate. The new immigrant can only endure this treatment for a few years before experience and labour unions bring him to demand the working conditions of the Canadianized worker he replaced.

For James Shaver, Canadianizing the immigrant was making him a functioning citizen of the nation with knowledge of British democratic rights and social values. It was a way to improve his living and working conditions. The pressure of capitalists forced labour to organize. Shaver observed that the immigrant’s experience in a trade union “is real training in democracy since democracy is fundamentally the art of living together.” Unions “must deal with immigrants constructively, as a means of self-preservation.” In the union, the immigrant learns how to build an organization that teaches democracy and rejects revolution.

The Coal Handlers’ Union was welcomed at Wayside House; its meetings were held there. As the Coal Handlers’ Union developed and affiliated with the Longshoremen, Shaver observed the importance of the English language in its effective democratic operation. With an Italian president and a membership of Russians, Ukrainians, Slovaks and Syrians, speeches at meetings could be made in any language but there was always someone to translate discussions into English so the leaders understood the members. Shaver observed that in non-English speaking centres and in isolated communities in the region “red propagandists” were successful. The “radical firebrand” and syndicalist organizers were able to convince southern and eastern Europeans, who had never experienced democracy and whose language limited the exchange of ideas, that they had a shortcut to “paradise.”

Shaver wanted to cooperate
with and embrace every democratic institution and movement that worked to improve the community’s living conditions. The Fort William Italian Band, Ruthenian (Ukrainian) Literary and Benevolent Society, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, American Women’s Club and several citizens’ groups used Wayside House as a meeting place. Democracy was, for Shaver, about persuasion because that was “the only door to progress open to man. Anything else is anarchy, is chaos—persuade the majority and you have what you want, what you ought to have.”

James Shaver saw society as “an organism and every part must help the whole;” it is a collective effort in which mutually interdependent groups work to improve the lives of each individual and his neighbour. Society is not single individuals acting in his or her self-interest, as the businessman would have it. The public trusted that capital and labour would regulate the marketplace, but corporate combines reduced competition to such a degree that both labour and the public were often exploited.

The suppression of strikes and opposition to socialist causes by force at the Lakehead was the blunt instrument used to sustain the social order. As delegate for the Fort William Ministerial Association and the Trades and Labor Council, James Shaver opposed such force and the violence that resulted from it. During the 1913 street railway strike Shaver explained to workers why he thought a strike was justified. The industrial world has taken the form of a trinity of powers: the capitalist, labour and the public. When management moves to disturb the balance between the three or moves to crush one of the powers we will have war, “war until righteousness prevails and every man will have the opportunity of expressing his full manhood.” This labour fight is about principles and is of societal importance; it is about “truth and righteousness.” Shaver observed that the street railway union members’ were capable of discussing this big issue, as men “feeling intensely their duty as citizens....” This was the way in which unions should operate according to Shaver; reasonably and democratically as an important social power composed of citizens seeking a balance of social and economic power.

Shaver wrote that if the nation is an organism, “in order to lift all we must have a cooperative community effort.” “To this end we must remove the injustices of the financial world or remove finances as the measure of success.” He in-
sisted that

“[w]e must be honest as a [human] race as well as individuals if Christ’s Kingdom is to come to us. We are not honest where we let one man live off the production of another or furnish employment for one for ten hours and another none.”26

**The Challenge**

Until James M. Shaver arrived in the coal docks, the Protestant presence there had been a little Baptist mission and Sunday school among the Slavic people and a similar attempt by Presbyterians.27 Protestant clergymen tried to bring immigrants into their churches. Methodists worked with children and Presbyterians with adults but immigrants were wary of these proselytization attempts.

Father Louis Napoleon Dugas s.j. of the Fort William Mission commented on one minister’s sermon to a group of Ukrainians. Young Galicians (Ukrainians) frequently interrupted him with wisecracks, irreverent comments, and heckling. With some satisfaction, Father Dugas concluded “[a]ll immigrants hold to their faith and their rite.”28

In the coal docks James Shaver found himself in a hostile environment. He soon learned that although the enclave’s Roman Catholic churches, St. Peter, Slovak, St. Joseph, Italian, and Greek Catholic or Uniate Church, squabbled amongst themselves, they were unified in their “hatred” of the work Wesley Institute was doing. The only exception was the Greek Orthodox Church.

Although he tried, Shaver could not persuade the priests to cooperate in an effort to bring people together in a spirit of “freedom and mutual understanding.”29 Instead he met resistance and roadblocks. Some children would not enter Wayside House because they feared the reaction of their priest. At St. Peter School, teaching nuns actively “discouraged” children from attending Wayside House.30

One Italian priest told Shaver that “Protestants worship the Devil,” and the priest was surprised when Shaver could recite the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostle’s Creed.”31

Shaver knew that past initiatives of Protestant clergymen in the coal docks area had failed, but Wesley Institute offered something different. For the first time a comprehensive community outreach was initiated with goals broader than those of a national/ethnic church. “We work from the standpoint, not of creed or nationality,” explained Shaver, “but of a divine brotherhood of God and the equally divine brotherhood of man. If we can help a man be better he will be better in his own church and will
help us be better in ours.”

James Shaver respected the religious traditions of Roman Catholics in the coal docks. The Italian Easter observance, the Corpus Christi outdoor procession, and the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Church’s elaborate ceremony called “The Blessing of the Waters” impressed him. He was struck by the devotion of the people and the strength of the church’s hold on them.

Wesley Institute did not want to establish a church; James Shaver endeavored to build an institution that would create social change. He equated the reform of society with an individual’s redemption in Christ. An evangelical spirit drove this zeal for education, urban reform and social improvement. Although he remained an evangelical Methodist, Shaver knew that proselytization in the coal docks was counterproductive. It created suspicion and mistrust among immigrants that could prevent their Canadianization.

Shaver adopted a consistent, practical non-denominational approach to serving immigrants and so did Wesley Institute. However, when a teachable moment arose in a discussion with immigrants about a social issue, Shaver would present his views. When a night school conversation led to personal religion and its meaning to an individual, James Shaver seized the opportunity. “These are the times,” he wrote, “when we preach as vital sermons as we ever could hope to preach from a pulpit and we get them home to the hearts of men whom we could reach in no other way.”

By taking a nondenominational stance, James Shaver limited Wesley Institute’s conflict with ethnic churches in the coal docks, thereby improving its chances of achieving its goal of social change. Social change depended upon the changing attitudes of both immigrants and the English-speakers. This would be a political project and James Shaver took his message to many organizations in the community. He developed an extensive network of friendships and contacts in every social class and economic interest in the city. He was invited to speak to unions and the Trades and Labor Council and the Fort William Board of Trade. Shaver was just as comfortable addressing the Independent Labor Party as he was the Con-
servative Liberal Association. At city council, Shaver was welcomed for his effectiveness and social knowledge; at the YMCA he was active as a speaker, fundraiser and director. Among his friends at the Ukrainian Hall and at the office of Italian Vice-Consul, Shaver was a confidante.

The people of Wesley Church driven by a fervent belief in the social gospel movement entered the world of politics. They would remain there, declared Shaver, until social change was achieved.

Education

In the summer of 1912, James M. Shaver stood in middle of McTavish Street staring at what was once a pool hall. The humble structure had been transformed. It was now clean, fitted with a black board, a table, 100 folding chairs and an imposing name—Wesley Institute. It was also known as Wayside House, a name that came from a line in the poem “The House by the Side of the Road” by the popular American poet Samuel Walter Foss.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by-
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish – so am I.

Then why should I sit in the scorners seat
Or hurl the cynics ban-
“Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.”

“Its good to keep looking at something if you want the other fellow to look at it too,” recalled Shaver, “so as I stood looking my mission over, along came a little group of men who started to look too, until quite a group had gathered. They were passing remarks in some foreign tongue, which of course I didn’t understand.” Then a big fair six-foot “blonde Goliath” asked if it was a poolroom or dance hall? Shaver told them it was a school to teach them English.

“When the men again asked if Shaver could speak Russian, Italian, Polish or Ukrainian, he had to say no, the men were dumbfounded.”

The men were curious now so Shaver offered them a lesson. Goliath informed the men, who took him up on his offer. They took their seats in the former poolroom. Since all the men worked night shifts, they were taught English words for waking up. Using humor, dramatization and repetition, the men learned quickly. “Goliath was completely carried away, and he said half under his breath, “By G--! He can do it.”” As the impromptu class broke up, some of the men
assured the teacher “that a ‘hell of a lot of men’ would come to the school.” Those were prophetic words; over the next nine years hundreds of men and women attended adult night school classes at Wesley Institute.

At the time almost one third of Fort William’s population was non–English speaking prompting the city librarian, Mary J.L. Black, to observe that we are “[a]lready a non- Anglo-Saxon city.” She was not alone in her concern that the Anglo-Canadian dominance of the city was threatened. The Fort William Board of Trade decided to do something about it. Urged by James Shaver in an address before the board, it agreed to pay for his promotional scheme. Posters were printed with the slogan “Fort William an English Speaking City in Three Years.” These were posted in work places where business owners ordered their foremen to show the posters to the men and “ordered them to urge the men to attend night school.” It is impossible to tell how effective this rather heavy-handed approach to recruitment was, but Wesley Institute served many adult learners. Some immigrants came because they were ambitious, some saw the utility in knowing the language of work and commerce, and the social atmosphere Wayside House may have attracted others. No matter what the reason, 230 students from 16 nationalities attended during the first five months of operation.

These numbers remained consistent for the first four years despite the end of the wheat boom, an exodus of workers, and recruitment for the Great War. Three hundred men learned to read and write English during those four years and over one thousand attended classes over a nine-year period.

In 1912 the little night school at Wayside House was somewhat
experimental. Shaver was searching for methods that worked. He could rely on the “system of dramatized teaching of English” he learned from Dr. Peter Roberts in Toronto and University Settlement House provided him with some teaching experience. He was also familiar with the methods of Friedrich Froebel, Johann Pestalozzi and especially John Dewey who would have approved of the classes at Wayside House that were social, interactive and often led to discussions of democracy and social reform.

Shaver was not an aloof, starched-collared prelate. He was a friendly, charismatic, and determined man whose winning personality drew people to the makeshift night school. His teaching techniques were successful with coal docks pupils who were often too tired or hungry, after the day’s labour, to learn by traditional methods. The promise of assistance in finding a job also attracted some adults to the night school program. Sixty men and several women attended night school English classes at least three times a week for a month during the first year. Several completed the full six-month course. One student was motivated to consider attending high school, one was hired as a street railway conductor, and another became a CPR baggage handler.

This early success was remarkable in light of the fact that Shaver could not speak a second language. However he could depend on his co-worker, Miss Madeline Foley for assistance if needed. She could speak Polish and may have understood Ukrainian and Russian. An experienced and enthusiastic worker, Miss Foley was on loan from the All Peoples’ Mission in Winnipeg.

One of the goals of the night school was to Canadianize immigrants. Shaver believed this was essential in the lives of newcomers since it included them in the building of a modern democratic nation. For him, this was crucial to the development of Canada and should have been the responsibility of the Fort William Board of Education.

The board’s experience with night school had not been a positive one. In 1910, Elmore Everton Wood, the board’s supervising principal of public schools, was authorized to use a room in Ogden School to run a night school for “foreigners” and a night class for Chinese students. When this was unsuccessful, Mr. Wood reorganized the night school. In 1911 a fee was charged for each class. Ogden night school classes
were offered to three groups: young men and women, industrial workers who studied higher math and drawing, and “foreign-speakers” who learned English. This failed too.

In 1914 the board was reluctant to get involved once again with adult education, but E.E. Wood was quick to declare the teaching at Wayside House “successful” and more “efficient” than in public schools. Earlier that year the board made a thorough assessment of the night school classes teaching English and Canadian citizenship to immigrants in the city’s ethnic enclaves. It concluded that this work “should be recognized in connection with the educational work of the city and we recommend that a grant of $300 be made to that work for the current year.” Presumably these funds went to Wesley Institute.

James Shaver was an ardent advocate of adult education and he encouraged the board of education to run the program. After demonstrating the effective operation of the program for two years, the board recognized its civic responsibility and adopted the program. Shaver was asked to provide adult night school classes at Ogden Street School in the east end where he could continue to serve the people of the coal docks. The arrangement lasted until 1919 when the board ended the program leaving Wayside House to complete the term without board funding.

In 1913, Wesley Institute night school required more teachers. Fort William, unlike Toronto, was not a university town with a ready supply of experienced volunteer teachers. Nevertheless, James M. Shaver made a general appeal for volunteers and from the pulpit of Wesley Church. He was not disappointed.

A series of five lectures was arranged to introduce volunteers to the task. The lectures were delivered at Fort William’s new Carnegie library on Brodie Street. The city librarian, Mary J.L. Black, was a friend of Wesley Institute and the cause of adult education, a cause she made her own. The lecturer was Mr. N.L. Burnett, a young civil engineer who volunteered to assist Shaver with night school classes. He was “so energized working with immigrant students to improve their language and cultural understanding that he became an effective advocate for the mission.”

Burnett rejected the accusation that immigrants were ignorant and illiterate. They speak their native tongue well; all they need to do “is clothe anew their ideas and experiences in the language of
the land of their adoption.” “The teacher must,” according to Mr. Burnett, “by the force of his character impel the respect of the alien [immigrant] and instill in him an ambition to speak the language, understand the ideals and enter the life of his teacher.” If the student “feels that his teachers are backed by the full force of public sympathy the battle is half won.”

Teacher training of volunteers was limited to Mr. Burnett’s demonstration of Dr. Robert’s technique that used “a good deal of pantomime.” This left teachers rather unprepared. When eighteen-year-old Cecil King faced his first class of forty adult, non-English-speaking students he did not feel confident. There were no textbooks; he used Eaton’s catalogues to create simple English phrases using pictures. He could also rely on dramatization, acting out words and sentences. Later textbooks from the international YMCA were used.

To make the teaching of immigrant adults more systematic and manageable, James Shaver prepared several instructional guides for the teaching of English, Canadian history, and civics. He also wrote a textbook, “Canadian History for Coming Canadians.” In simple English, its readings encouraged newcomers to learn Canada’s history and traditions as they practiced the English language. Civics was approached the same way; students learned English through the readings and the many discussions of national freedom, personal freedom and community issues.

E.E. Wood, now the principal of Fort William Collegiate Institute, was so impressed with Shaver’s excellent work with the “foreigner” that he wrote a glowing report to the minister of education. According to Mr. Wood, the work being done at the Ogden Street night school was superior to similar work being done elsewhere in the province. The Ontario Department of Education seemed to agree and accepted James Shaver’s work for provincial use in adult education.

The Wayside House volunteer operated in an ethnically divided city. Non-English-speaking workers clashed with their Anglo-Canadian employers. The Anglo-Canadian working class tended to view ethnic immigrants as competitors for scarce jobs who drove down their wages and
threatened their livelihood. The middle class found it easy to blame immigrants for urban poverty and social discord. This led to a general English Canadian belief that they were “the chosen People of God; all others, of an inferior race.”62 This attitude of Anglo-superiority divided the community, perpetuated ignorance, and bred suspicion and intolerance. James Shaver insisted that the workers at Wayside House had to be of the “highest national character of Canada today.” In order to hold the respect of newcomers, volunteer teachers had to be more than technically competent; they had to be “big, broad-minded, patriotic souls.” Without this personal relationship between volunteers and newcomers, the real objective would be lost.63

The night school English class was an opportunity for an intercultural connection between the teacher and adult learners. Shaver encouraged teachers to know something of the culture of the immigrants in the classroom. A teacher should know the newcomer’s cultural heroes and reformers such as Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour, Shevchenko and Tolstoy.64 This helped form a “bond of sympathy” between teacher and pupil “and our Canadian heroes and patriots, authors and artists became companions of theirs in their thoughts and they become spiritual citizens of our country as well as their own.”

Gradually, short lessons on Canadian social and commercial life, and the development of democracy, political reform and civics were introduced.65 Short biographies of national heroes—Radisson, Jesuit missionaries, Isaac Brock, and Lord Durham—were studied. Students examined Canadian civic life and learned that our judges, medical officers of health and magistrates are free of political influence. Aldermen and city officials can and should be criticized for their shortcomings such as “inadequate sewers in the foreign section of the city.” To reinforce the idea of freedom of speech and the press, some students wrote letters of grievance to the newspaper.66

Mike Mischuk was a political agent in Austria before he immigrated to Canada. James Shaver learned from him how the system operated. During an Austrian election, Mischuk gave the men beer and the children candy. The local people thought Mike worked for the city and he told them to vote for the third name on the ballot. After they voted he gave them two dollars for a vote. He could count on this vote because the people thought he knew how they voted because the Austrian government knows all. Many immigrants did...
not understand that in Canada they had a secret ballot. In Europe these individuals were members of a minority group under a foreign ruler; in Canada they saw themselves the same way. Wayside House was determined to change that.

In the week before the civic election, which was then an annual event, teachers delivered lessons on how the city was governed, followed by a mock election using dummy ballots. Students learned about their democratic rights in a very practical way.

James Shaver believed that democratic rights and freedoms were a “thing of experience.” During a municipal election he provided that experience. Shaver’s class wanted the participation of coal docks people in one of the municipal prohibition referendums held during the First World War. Ukrainian and Italian students conducted a door-to-door campaign that informed residents of the issues and registered every resident to vote. The students took direct political action to effect social change by the ballot.

Volunteer teachers were predominantly young middle class, Anglo-Canadian men. These included business and professional men like the Mr. Burnett, and grain weighman Cecil King among others. Female instructors included Shaver’s assistant Miss M.L. Redman. Although night school students were also usually men, immigrant women participated in the very first class. As women became comfortable with the activities of Wesley Institute, they became more likely to attend English classes. Some women were urged by their husbands to learn English so they could mix with Canadian women. In September 1917, 31 of the 151 night school students were women. This certainly pleased James Shaver since women had just attained fuller citizenship through the right to vote in federal elections.

From the first year of operation, night school students were involved in their community. In 1913 Fort William Public Library launched a citywide survey. However, librarian, Mary J.L. Black did not know how to canvass the ethnically diverse coal docks section. When James Shaver informed his night school students of the problem and asked for a few volunteers, the whole class came forward. He sent them out into the ethnic enclave in pairs, Italian and Slav. They cooperated “harmoniously” and Shaver reported “their enthusiasm and thoroughness shows they have caught the spirit of social service.”
This event cemented the bond between the public library and Wesley Institute. James Shaver and Mary J.L. Black were allies in the promotion of English language learning and immigrant education. One can only imagine the intense conversations between the two about the importance of cultural understanding and enfolding the “foreigner” in a patriotic embrace.

Miss Black, a Presbyterian, shared the Methodist minister’s liberal values embodied in the social gospel movement. He had a profound influence on the way she thought about the role of the library. Her library goals were similar to those of Wesley Institute. She believed the library should become a social centre for the learning of English, reading and inter-personal and inter-cultural exchange and the means to realize the new Canadian citizen or perhaps the ideal world citizen. She even used Shaver’s language when she articulated her vision to the Ontario Library Association in 1917. The library exists:

to make people more happy, to give them the touch of home they never get, to provide a social centre, to make people more efficient in their various lines of work, to teach them to read for the simple joy of it, and first and last to be the means of interpreting the Anglo-Saxon and our non-English speaking citizens to one another, and by means of the agency of books to show that even books are not ends in themselves but only an instrument to help create the highest type of humanity, possibly a new nationality—a New Canadian—or possibly again, the so-called ideal state of society in which the bonds of nationality will be destroyed.

A branch of the public library was opened at Wayside House where the circulation of books for children and adults was brisk. Transportation of coal dock residents to the Carnegie library on Brodie Street was provided by volunteers to help integrate newcomers into the community and to expose them to the wider world of books.

The library and Wesley Institute were effectively integrated for the purposes of immigrant education. Miss Black’s envisioned the library as “contributing toward the enlargement of the individual life and promotion of higher standards of citizenship... to a higher patriotism and to a profounder social brotherhood.” Even during the bleak war years when the city’s population declined, library patronage increased. Ninety thousand books were circulated
in 1916, or five books for every person in the city. WAYSIDE HOUSE & JAMES M. SHAVER

Wayside House readers were among the library’s loyal patrons. In 1914 the library had many non-English-speaking borrowers—138 adults and 159 children.

In 1916 Mary J. L. Black reported “our work with them [immigrants] last winter was most interesting, while the problem of meeting them becomes easier every day. The Italians have been the most numerous being attracted by books in their own tongue, but other nationalities, noticeably the Ruthenians, have proved better students of the English language.”

“Fort William public library was a treasure for me,” declared James Zelinka, one of Shaver’s night school students. In a letter that looked back fondly on his time in the city, Zelinka wrote that the library “was for every bookworm like me, a real paradise, first a very fine place more home-like than the majority of libraries, second a very fine selection of books, with the least best possible service.”

Wesley Institute had remarkable success in Canadianizing and educating some adult immigrants. Its recreational and social programs for boys and girls influenced the lives of many more individuals for whom ethnic and class barriers would become less formidable.

Wesley Institute Children’s Programs

The first institutions involved in the Canadianization of the immigrant children were the public and separate schools. When, children were taught to read, write and speak English they took their first steps to becoming Canadians.

The first coal docks neighbourhood school was located in the Baptist Church Mission on McDonald Street in September 1897. Mrs. Florence Sherk, author and accomplished kindergarten teacher, was appointed by the Fort William Board of Education to take charge of the school. Although there were only twelve immigrant children in her first class of fifty students, attendance increased annually and so did the number of non-English-speaking children. By 1905 the school-age population was 250 and grew to over 600 in 1911. To accommodate the increasing number of children in the area, the Fort William Board of Education opened the four-room Ogden Street School in 1901.

At Ogden Florence Sherk excelled as an innovative teacher who was remarkably successful in working with immigrant children. Her concern for her students extended beyond the classroom. When she observed that many Ogden
children did not have adequate winter clothing she organized the collection of shoes and clothing for them during the winter of 1907. Although her teaching career ended in 1907, Sherk’s commitment to children and education did not. She was an active supporter of Wayside House activities and was a women’s activist and education convener with the West Algoma Council of Women.\[88\]

The Fort William Separate School Board opened a temporary school for up to sixty students in the basement of the unfinished St Peter (Slovak) Church in 1909-1910. The following academic year St. Peter School, a four-room brick building, was opened near St. Peter Church. Staffed by two Sisters of St. Joseph and a lay teacher, St. Peter School provided education for the first four grades. St. Stanislaus School on Myles Street, opened in 1902, served other Catholic students.\[89\] Nevertheless, the separate schools did not teach all of the Catholic students; many attended Ogden.

Not everyone was convinced that the Canadianization efforts of the schools were adequate. James Shaver would have agreed with Mary J.L. Black’s assessment that Canadianization of Fort William’s non-English-speaking children could not be left to schoolteachers. Miss Black declared that this national social issue “presents a question the schools as at present organized can only handle to a limited extent.”\[90\] The public library and Wesley Institute were two organizations that could provide a variety of strong, focused, and popular extra-curricular programs to augment the tepid Canadianization work of schools. Wayside and the library endeavored to instill in children democratic values, civic virtues and national pride. Moreover, they worked towards developing a new tolerant, distinctly Canadian citizen. Wesley Institute and the library had a larger vision of citizenship than the boards of education.

In this work, Wayside received the support of the Fort William Board of Education and the staff of Ogden Street School. The teaching nuns at St. Peter School discouraged students from attending Wayside. Since the Methodist Church funded Wayside House, the nuns feared their students would be turned into Protestants.\[91\]

J. Defeo was born in 1911 into a very strong Catholic family on McLeod Street to parents who emigrated from Naples in 1901. Like many Catholic children he became involved in the activities at Wayside. According to Mr. Defeo the Catholic Church’s opposition
was ineffective because Wayside offered something the Catholic Church did not. It was a “movement of young people who were trying to better themselves” said Mr. Defeo and it was a “sports organization, something that kept us from getting into trouble.” He considered the “Reverend Cecil King one of the finest men I ever met, he was a true Christian... and my parents thought so too.” King became and a frequent visitor to the family home.92

For Girls

Shaver defined the city’s problem as one of social division. Fort William’s ethnic, cultural, and class divide was the result of “aloofness and ignorance.” His solution was to have Wesley Institute workers and friends “make an effort to understand the foreigner, and help them understand us.” A campaign was initiated to promote inter-cultural and inter-class leisure and social mixing to promote appreciation, understanding, mutual respect and brotherhood.93

Wayside House focused much of its energy on working with children. After all, there were 2,000 of them under seventeen in the east end, 1,300 of whom were in the mission’s coal docks neighbourhood.94 In 1912, during its first year of operation, Wayside House had remarkable success attracting neighbourhood girls to its programs. Miss Madeline M. Foley and Miss M. Gertrude Dobson, experienced settlement workers from the Winnipeg Mission Society, organized cooking and sewing classes for twenty-three girls. This number would triple during the next decade.95 Their interpersonal skills were important in attracting youngsters, but they had credibility in the coal docks because both women lived among them in a small building on the Wayside property. Miss Foley, fluent in Polish visited homes, assisted the sick and offered advice to families in difficulties.96

In 1914, Mabel L. Hannah, a graduate of the Chicago school of Civics and Philanthropy, and Miss May Harrison carried on the social work of Miss Foley and Miss Dobson who returned to Winnipeg.97 Neighborhood girls who were experiencing conflicts with their families or juvenile court were a concern for Wayside workers. They introduced the Big Sisters program based on the Big Sisters movement. Begun in New York City the movement was established in Toronto after 1912 and was spearheaded by Mrs. A.M. Huestis of the Local Council of Women. Concerned prominent women were paired with girls who had social problems
with their families, juvenile court or petty crime. The program encouraged caring relationships, sympathy, love and understanding. In Fort William, Big Sisters began slowly in 1915 when five Canadian women volunteered. The following year the program grew to twelve big sisters and the results were better than expected.

Wesley Institute assisted immigrants with citizenship applications and helped those in its programs secure jobs. Under the supervision of Mabel Hannah, twenty-six coal docks girls were placed in jobs in 1918. To ensure their success in the workplace, Wesley Institute monitored the relationships between the girls and their employers as well as their conditions of work. Where problems existed, necessary adjustments were made with employers. Wayside workers kept in touch with the girls and, if necessary, the workers would help the girls establish a bank account and even supervise their spending.

Home Clubs were introduced in 1917. Six Wayside House girls could form a club that, one night a week, visited an uptown Canadian woman who would introduce them to her home, promote good reading and “a desire for better things in the lives of the bright little coming Canadians.” Exposing girls to the homes, manners and values of middle-class Canadian women was a way of crossing class and cultural barriers. It gave the girls an understanding of Canadian domestic life and culture; it gave the girls something to which they could aspire.

Another Wayside House initiative known as “special outings” sought to do the same thing with larger groups of working-class girls. Sometimes the outing was a formal picnic at a local park with as many as forty girls, or a garden party at the home of a notable woman such as Mrs. T.M. Piper who was Margaret Campbell, daughter of former police chief Alexander Campbell. Mrs. George Graham, nee Annabelle Ross, wife of a wealthy businessman, hosted twenty-five Wayside House girls who attended a production of Maurice Maeterlinck’s popular play, Blue Bird. Florence Sherk, former Ogden School principal and women’s activist accompanied ten young ladies to the showing of D.W. Griffith’s film, Hearts of the World, a World War I love story.

The popular Camp Fire Girls Club brought girls from the coal docks together with girls from other Fort William neighbourhoods. Started in the U.S. in 1911, the Camp Fire Girls provided an experience for girls similar to what boys had in the Boy Scouts.
Wayside House adapted the Camp Fire Girls to its needs. It was a multicultural club where girls learned cooperation while working on service projects. The volunteer leader called the “Guardian of the Fire” organized outdoor adventures into the woods where they learned to cook over an open fire, and practice woodcraft. “Work, health and love,” was their motto and they aimed to “extend the spirit of the home to the neighbourhood, the city, the country and the uttermost parts of the earth.”

For Boys

From the outset Wesley Institute worked to engage the boys of the coal docks in healthy and positive activities. The first Fort William Scout troop was persuaded, perhaps by scouting enthusiast Mayor S.C. Young, to meet at Wayside House in order to bring together Canadian boys with immigrant boys of the neighbourhood. It was not long before many of the coal docks boys abandoned the troop. They were suspicious of the organization’s motives; they feared that the Scouts were a government program to enforce military service or an attempt at religious proselytization. Shaver was, no doubt, disappointed. These difficulties with the Scouts could not be overcome and that organization never became part of the Wesley Institute program. Where the Camp Fire Girls succeeded, the Boy Scouts failed.

Nevertheless, James Shaver and volunteers did offer twenty junior boys an outdoor experience on at least one occasion. They spent a night in the woods, hiking, learning woodcraft, and cooperation. Camped by a river, the boys slept soundly under a canopy of stars.

A Boys Club was started to give the kids a sense of belonging and membership grew when manual training courses were introduced. However, once gymnastic classes were possible in 1918 with the purchase of gym mats, 150 boys were involved in afternoon, evening and Saturday classes. The 65 older boys were eligible for membership in the [Lord] Durhams, and a similar club for younger boys was called the [Egerton] Ryersons. Each club had a ritual initiation that was, as the club names suggest, “distinctly Canadianizing.”

Cecil King, Shaver’s Wayside House assistant, took charge of the boy’s department. By 1920, King ran seven classes of woodworking for 160 boys. New gym mats and apparatus attracted an average of 65 boys to wrestling, gymnastics, calisthenics and basketball every week. Cecil King befriended
many of the boys during the summer activities he organized at St. Peter’s School playground. The mutual respect that developed between him and the boys on the playground resulted in many boys (300 boys in 1921) “flocking” to Wayside House woodworking and gym classes in September. The boys were often boisterous and lacked adequate discipline at home. At Wayside, they became focused on woodworking projects and sports that required friendship, teamwork and cooperation to accomplish. Discipline was instilled during the weekly classes and boys with leadership potential were given special classes and no doubt assisted with gym instruction.  

Physical activity and sports was viewed, at the time, as an important aspect of the full Christian life in which the physical, intellectual, and spiritual were combined in a strong disciplined, fair-minded individual. This was popularly known as “Muscular Christianity” and “provided the spiritual basis for the YMCA’s athletic undertakings.” Physical fitness was seen as necessary for a healthy robust citizen and a strong and vital nation. It is not surprising then to find qualified YMCA gymnastics instructors working with local east end boys at Wayside House three mornings a week. The Fort Wil-
liam YMCA was completed in November 1912. This imposing four-story brick building on Archibald Street had gyms, swimming pool, residences, and meeting rooms. It was the physical embodiment in the city’s belief in the modern well-rounded citizen.

According to Mr. King, the YMCA was of great assistance in developing the athletic skills of the Wayside House boys. By 1920, the YMCA program was coordinated with that of Wayside House. Gymnastics and wrestling were the most popular sports and many of the senior boys became responsible enough to be allowed to use the gym independently. There were almost as many boys training at Wayside House as there were at the YMCA. The relationship between Wesley Institute and the Y was close indeed. Many of the young coal docks and east end athletes were given free memberships to the Y where they mixed with fellows from across the city. The gymnastic routines learned at Wayside House made them feel at home at the Archibald Street YMCA.

When the boys at the McTavish Street mission decide they wanted to play competitive baseball, they organized a team and called themselves the Wayside Wallopers. The team consisted of many nationalities but when they played they were thoroughly Canadian. The Wallopers competed in the junior Church League and played in parks across the city with boys from every neighbourhood. Friendly competition built loyalty, character, and citywide community friendships.

Playgrounds and Parks

The civic playground movement had taken firm hold in Fort William by the summer of 1914. Fred Stephenson supervised the city’s five playgrounds where there was a “vigorous program” and an “army of boys and girls to instruct.” Despite the depression, the war and spending restraints city council steadfastly supported parks and playgrounds because they were popular, socially significant, and inexpensive to operate.

In 1915 a coalition of parks supporters, including the Boards of Education, women’s groups, and clergymen, opened the playground season at the YMCA. The Daily Times-Journal declared the playground movement “firmly rooted in the heats of children and a large section of the people of the
Nowhere was this more obvious than in the “foreign quarter” at Ogden Street School, and especially St. Peter School playgrounds. The playgrounds “serve to educate and Canadianize our foreign population,” observed the newspaper, since the playground allowed immigrant parents and their children to interact with people and customs of their new country. During a summer in city playgrounds, children learned discipline, organization, character development, and how to make new friends.

Wesley Institute was deeply involved in the summer playground program that reflected its community ideals. James Shaver was a director on the playground committee in 1919, but Wayside House had been working in Ogden and St. Peter playgrounds since 1914. In 1920 Cecil King was appointed director of St. Peter school playground and he expanded the cultural appeal of the playground beyond games, sports, and recreational activities. Shaver organized an evening of community singing at St. Peter playground that included an impressive number of performances by neighbourhood people. These included a vocal solo by Margaret Tiboni, a Russian recitation by Julie Dakuchic, a vocal duet of Rose Cerutti and Mary Petrie, a vocal solo by Anthony Krywicka, and an instrumental duet performed by the Bembin brothers among many others. As

participants in the Fort William Playground Program, c.1914. (TBHMS 987.5.103)
usual the large crowd ended the multi-ethnic evening of entertainment with the usual singing of God Save the King.  

During the summer of 1920, Wesley Institute screened silent films at St. Peter School playground. People from the neighbourhood and beyond were drawn to the event. One August evening a crowd of over one thousand men, women, girls, and boys filled the space in front of the school and well into the street. Between film showings, Mr. King, the playground director, sat at the piano and played popular songs with energetic audience participation. Neighbourhood people from southern Europe shared their traditional songs with the appreciative crowd. It was such a triumph for the St. Peter playground that a newspaper reporter in attendance was compelled to declare it the “ideal community playground.”

In 1920, Fort William playgrounds and parks were centres of music and social harmony thanks to the Fort William Italian Band. Their first free concert at Minnesota Park in the east end attracted an audience 1,000. When they returned to Minnesota Park in August, their audience doubled. Dressed in black uniforms with red piping, the band, which was a marching outfit, looked sharp and under the leadership of Ralph Colosimo, their performances were impressive. The band drew large crowds for sacred events like the Corpus Christi procession, benefit concerts, and civic events. The Fort William Italian Band was widely praised for “showing a splendid community spirit.” In 1913, the band began its association with Wesley Institute; here the band found a home and rehearsal space. James Shaver “encouraged” the civic commitment of the musicians and helped them build the “excellent organization” it became.

Conclusion

In summer of 1921, James, Mrs. Shaver, and their two young sons left Fort William to direct the work of the All Peoples’ Mission in Winnipeg. A large group, representing some of the lives he touched, gathered at Wesley Methodist Church to share in an emotional farewell. Clergymen, playground supervisors, YMCA officials, the editor of the *Daily Times-Journal*, Board of Education officials, local lawyers, Ukrainian community leaders, and children wished them the best. Shaver said he “only tried to be good neighbour while in Fort William.” “People had been very kind and sympathetic,” he recalled, “but, best of all, he had appreciated
the real friendship he had found among the people whom he tried to help here.”

Shaver could look back on nine years of accomplishments. Between 1912 and 1921 the Rev. James M. Shaver with the support of the people of Wesley Methodist Church, the Protestant clergy of the Lakehead, and many dedicated volunteers firmly rooted Wesley Institute in the coal docks. Despite the First World War and the social disruption of those turbulent years, the McTavish Street mission was a permanent presence in the area. Motivated by the fervor of the social gospel movement, James Shaver rejected aggressive evangelism and proselytization in favour of a tolerant, nondenominational approach. This was the most appropriate position for the cultural environment of the coal docks. It minimized conflict with the Roman Catholic national churches and allowed the programs of Wesley Institute to flourish. Wesley Institute depended largely on middle-class English-speaking workers and volunteers for its programs. Shaver was keenly aware of the Canadian tendency see themselves as superior to immigrants. He spoke publicly about Anglo-superiority as an ignorant and divisive attitude, one that had no place at Wayside House.

Wesley Institute encouraged Canadianization of immigrants through adult night school English language and civics classes. These programs promoted character development and an understanding of Canadian citizenship and democracy. Classroom discussion encouraged students to think independently, participate in social reform, and in the improvement of their workplace, neighbourhood and community.

Shaver’s McTavish Street mission gave many immigrants and their children the opportunity to participate more comfortably in Canadian society. It also allowed them to participate effectively in their unions and in their ethnic institutions. Wayside House encouraged friendship, pride and participation within the immigrant communities, in the coal dock neighbourhood, and in the wider Lakehead community.

Endnotes

The author would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of provided by Diane Haglund at the United Church of Canada Archives at the University of Winnipeg.

1 Livio Di Matteo, “Wealth and Inequality on Ontario’s Northwestern Frontier: Evidence from Probate,” Histoire Sociale/Social History. 38:75 (2005), 82. Using the probated estate records, the
author revealed the inequality of wealth during the Wheat Boom. The average annual wealth for a
general labourer in Fort William and Port Arthur during this period was $754 while gentlemen,
retired and esquire had an average wealth of $22,867. Those in trade and merchandising enjoyed an
average of $14,586.

2 Tony Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (New York, 2010), 185.
3 See Garnet Clay Porter, "Winnipeg Telegram" Newspaper reports on Fort William Freight
4 Typescript of James M. Shaver’s "How Fort William Makes Canadians." Conference of Mani-
toba and Northwestern Ontario, United Church Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba (hereafter UCA-
MNWO). Shaver Papers, PP47, file L, 12-13. All United Church Archives material was photocopied.
5 F. Brent Scollie, "Ira N. Gerry," *Thunder Bay Mayors and Councillors, 1873-1945*. (TB-
HMS, 2000), CD-ROM. Typescript of James M. Shaver’s "The Beginning of Wayside House Fort
6 Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Church
7 "How Fort William Makes Canadians." Shaver Papers, 12-13. For 1911 census see Shirley Frances
Payment, "The Big Project: James M. Shaver at All People’s Mission, Winnipeg, 1921-1941," (Win-
8 Shirley Frances Payment, "The Big Project." 46. The biographical material is from S. Payment’s
conversation with Shaver’s son the Reverend M.J.V. Shaver in Vancouver 27 November 1996. "There
is no family connection between James Shaver Woodsworth and James M. Shaver. According to
Jack Shaver, his father and J.S. Woodsworth spent many hours tracing family history but were unable
9 Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University
10 Burke, 57.
11 Burke, 58; and Peter Douglas, "James M. Shaver: A Two-Talent Man." *Touchstone Journal*,
7:2 (May 1989), 39.
12 Burke, see endnote 149. Mrs. Shaver graduated with a MA from Queen’s University in 1907
and was paid for her work at University Settlement House.
13 Burke, 63.
14 Burke, 62.
15 Burke, 138
16 Typescript by James M. Shaver, "The Immigrant in Industry," 1920. MNWO-UCA, PP47,
Shaver Papers, file L, 3.

21 *DTJ*, 18 December 1920. Taken from a sermon.

22 "Personal Convictions.” Shaver Papers, 16.


24 Ibid. 5.

25 Ibid. 7.

26 “Personal Convictions,” Shaver Papers, 16.

27 James M. Shaver, "Wesley Institute: What it is and What it Does," MNWO-UCA, PP47, Shaver Papers, file J. 1. The Baptist mission, located on McDonald Street in the coal docks, was a 20’ x 30’ building that could seat 100 people. It was opened 2 November 1896 with evangelical sermons by the Reverend B.W. Merrill. See *Fort William Daily Journal* (hereafter *FWDJ*), 23 October 1896 and 6 March 1896. (The author would like to thank F. Brent Scollie for bringing these sources to his attention.)


29 Typescript of James M. Shaver’s “Address to Mayor Young and Members of the City Council, Chairman of the Board of Provincial License Commissioners Province of Ontario. 23 Sept 1915.” UMNWO-UCA, PP47, Shaver Papers, file J. 10.


31 "Address to Mayor Young,” Shaver Papers, 10; and “Wesley Institute: What it is and What it does,” Shaver Papers, 2.


37 *DTJ*, 6 July 1914.

38 *DTJ*, 21 April 1921.

39 Cecil King interview. TBHMS, Biographical File, 8.


46 *“First Annual Report of Wesley Institute 1912-1913,”* Shaver Papers; and *DTJ*, 11 October 1913.


48 *“The Immigrant: Care, Financial Assistance and Advice,”* Shaver Papers. 4.

49 Elmore Everton Wood, born 13 August 1872, was the legendary principal of Fort William Collegiate Institute. A mathematics teacher with a M.A. from McMaster, he taught at the city’s first high school, he then became supervising principal of public schools in 1910 and principal of FWCI in July 1912. He retired in June 1939 and died 27 November 1959 at the age of 86. An oil portrait of him by Kenneth Forbes hung prominently in FWCI. Mr. Wood was a Baptist deacon, which earned him the sobriquet “The Deak” from students. Subsequent male principals were often called the Deak. (The author would like to thank F. Brent Scollie for this biographical information).

50 Lakehead District School Board Archives (hereafter LDSBA), Fort William Board of Education Committee Meetings, 1908-1914, Joint Meeting of Management, 18 February 1910, 89.

51 LDSBA, Management Committee no. 7, 10 November 1910, 116 and Management Committee no.22, 23 October 1911, 180.

52 *DTJ*, 17 October 1914.

53 LDSBA, Fort William Board of Education Committee Meetings, 1908-1914, Management Committee no. 2, 3 June 1914, 340.


56 Cecil King interview. TBHMS, Biographical File. 3.

57 DTJ, 17 October 1913.

58 Ibid., 29 October 1913.

59 Cecil King interview. TBHMS, Biographical File. 3.
“Wesley Institute: What it is and What it Does.” Shaver Papers, 2. Curriculum material can be found in MNWO-UCA, PP48, Shaver Papers, file A.

“Pay Farewell Tributes to Mr; and Mrs. Shaver.” n.d. (photocopied newspaper clipping). PP47, Shaver Papers, file C. No copies of James M. Shaver’s “textbook” have been located and it was probably not commercially published. Like Shaver's instructional guides, “Canadian History for Coming Canadians” was probably reproduced in small quantities and stapled together with a cover page.

J.M. Shaver. “Civic Problems and the Immigrant,” in *Christian Guardian*, 4 October 1916. 10-13. (photocopy). Synopsis of a paper given at the Canadian Public Health Association Congress, Quebec, September 12 and 14. 11. An example of Anglo-superiority can be found in *DTJ*, 11 June 1919. Fort William councilor, Edward Clement Smith was against immigrant education because immigrants opposed British born subjects and the education of newcomers encouraged them to write to family members at home, send money home and that promoted more immigration.

Ibid.


Typescript, James Shaver. “Civic Problems caused by the Immigrant,” an address to the Canadian Public Health Association Congress, Quebec, September 1-14, 1916. PP47, Shaver Papers, file L. 5.


“Civic Problems and the Immigrant,” Shaver Papers, 5. TBA, City Clerk’s Files, 005-24, 163, Lessons in government, Set no. 1.


*DTJ*, 17 October 1913; and Cecil King interview. TBHMS, Biographical File. 3.

Born in 1895, Cecil King was the third of six children born to Ernest and Elibeth King who emigrated from England in 1911. They settled in Fort William to join Elibeth’s cousin who lived there. At first King was not interested in religion but attended Wesley Methodist Church with his relatives. When James Shaver appealed for assistance at the mission, Cecil King volunteered. In the winter of 1913, while attending evangelical services at Wesley Church, he had a conversion experience that he described as “an uncontrollable impulse to go forward.” When King returned from war service in the summer of 1919 James Shaver hired him to work with the Wayside boys. Margaret Bloomfield who was in charge of the girls department married Cecil King in 1920. When Shaver moved to Winnipeg in 1921, Mr. King managed Wesley Institute and oversaw the construction of the new Wayside House.

In 1926 Cecil King moved to Winnipeg and worked at the All Peoples Mission while studying at Wesley College. He was ordained in 1929. See Ancestry.com, 1911 Census of Canada, and Cecil King interview. TBHMS, Biographical File. 3, 6, 8, 9, 10.


Typescript of James M. Shaver’s “Wesley Institute has a Record Year.” MNWO-UCA, PP47, Shaver Papers, file J. 4.


“Civic Problems and the Immigrant,” Shaver Papers, 2.

Library Association, Fifteenth Annual Meeting (Toronto: OLA, 1915), 72-80. (The author would like to thank F. Brent Scollie for locating this elusive article).

She was a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and would join the Wesley congregation after union in 1925. DTJ, obituary 4 January 1939.


James Zelinka to Mr. J.M. Shaver, 10 July 1916. MNWO-UCA, Shaver Papers, file D.

FWDJ, 6 July 1897. (The author would like to thank F. Brent Scollie for bringing this source to his attention.)

Fort William Journal, 28 August 1897. (The author would like to thank F. Brent Scollie for bringing this source to his attention.)

Roy Piovesana, Italians of Fort William's East End, 1907-1969 (Lakehead University, Institute of Italian Studies, 2011), 120.

DTJ, 25 October 1941.

Piovesana, Italians, 120, 121.

Ibid., 123. DTJ, 23 September 1920 and 3 February 1920.

Piovesana, Italians, 124.

Black, "A Town Survey," 77.

TBHMS, C. King interview. Biographical File.

Lakehead University Archives, Jean Morrison Labour History Collection A0014, Box 51, 186, audiotape C8, J. Defeo. Angel (J.) Defeo was the third of five children of Carmine and Maria Defeo. Carmine was a farm operator who worked with his brother-in-law Carmine Romano who boarded with the family. By 1921 the family home was at 627 McTavish Street, near Wesley Institute. Ancestry.com, 1921 Canadian Census.


Helen Caister Robinson. Decades of Caring: The Big Sister Story (Toronto: Dundurn


“Superintendent’s Report, 1 May 1918-April 1919.” Shaver Papers, 7.

“Dear Fellow Leaguers, 8 September 1917.” Shaver Papers, 3.

“Superintendent’s Report, 1 May 1918-April 1919.” Shaver Papers, 11.


“Superintendent’s Report Third Quarter, Wesley Institute, 28 February 1921,” Shaver Papers, 2.

“Dear Fellow Leaguers, 8 September 1917.” Shaver Papers, 2.

“Superintendent’s Report, 1 May 1918-April 1919.” Shaver Papers, 3.


C. Nathan Hatton, *Rugged Game: Community, Culture and Wrestling at the Lakehead to 1933* (Thunder Bay: Centre for Northern Studies Lakehead University, 2012), 31, 32.


Ibid., 3.

Ibid., 6.

Ibid., 5.

Ibid. Cecil King referred to this as the “local boy problem.”

Ibid., 6.

*DTJ*, 6 June 1914. The Fort William Board Education appointed a trustee to the Playground Commission in 1913. That was the first year the board’s playgrounds were used during the summer months. See LDSBA Fort William Board of Education Minutes, 1908-1922, 14 June 1913, 169 and 26 May 1913, 279.

*DTJ*, 2 July 1915.

Ibid., 2 September 1915.

Ibid., 2 September 1915.

Ibid., 2 September 1915.


*DTJ*, 10 July 1920.

The films were shown using a Victor safety projector purchased through the sale of victory bonds. See “Wesley Institute: What it is and What it Does,” Shaver Papers, 4. The projector was loaned to the parks commission, to those doing social work in Port Arthur, and to the YMCA. See “Superintendent’s Report 1 December 1920,” Shaver Papers, 1.

*DTJ*, 25 August 1920.

Ibid., 14 June 1920.


133 “Pay Farewell Tributes to Mr. and Mrs. Shaver” (newspaper clipping) n.d., MNWO-UCA, PP47, Shaver Papers. file C; and *DTJ*, 31 March 1921.
Following the outbreak of the First World War, un-naturalized immigrants, many of whom were reservists, became designated as “enemy aliens” in countries in which they had until then been contributing members of society. Most of the belligerent states took steps to control the movement and restrict the departure of their enemy aliens for fear that they would return back to their respective home countries to join the armed forces. When Canada entered the war on 4 August 1914, parliament passed the War Measures Act granting broad emergency powers to the federal government. The federal government proceeded to introduce several orders-in-council that included the requirement that un-naturalized civilians of various ethnic backgrounds from Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, and Turkey register as enemy aliens. On 28 October 1914 and 26 June 1915, the government issued orders-in-council that led to the internment of over 8,500 civilians in twenty-four camps across the country from 1914 to 1920. Among the un-naturalized civilians who were targeted for internment were Croatians who had immigrated to Canada from Austria-Hungary.

Almost immediately after the federal government began introducing orders-in-council related to enemy aliens and their internment, Croatian and other immigrants who had arrived from countries that were now in a state of war with Britain and Canada often sought to avoid imprisonment by crossing the border into then neutral United States of America. However, municipal police forces, the Dominion Police, the Royal North West Mounted Police, as well as immigration, border, and railway officials closely monitored the movement of immigrants in Canada. This was particularly true in cities and towns in close proximity to the United States border where many un-naturalized immigrants
were often scooped up, processed and then transferred to internment camps in Canada’s interior.

One individual who faced the prospect of internment was the immigrant Franjo (Frank) Tadej (1887-1969) of Hreljin, Croatia. Sixteen-year-old Tadej immigrated to Canada in 1913 and initially settled in Sudbury where his cousin Stipan Tadej lived. Like other immigrant labourers in Canada during this period, Frank Tadej moved from town to town and province to province in search of employment. In 1914 he was working for Canadian Northern Railway on the expansion of its line in the Peace River area of British Columbia and was laid off with other workers just before Christmas. Tadej subsequently rode the rails from British Columbia to Port Arthur, Ontario where he came into contact with fellow Croatian and South Slavic immigrant labourers who were also seeking work.

In the reminiscences that follow, Tadej describes his successful evasion of Canadian authorities and crossing the border illegally into the United States to escape the internment dragnet. However, his friend Luka Ćalić would not be so lucky. Ćalić remained behind in Port Arthur and was eventually arrested and sent to Kapuskasing internment camp. In 1938 the two were reunited by chance in the United States. During that chance meeting, Ćalić shared with Tadej his personal story of capture, imprisonment at Kapuskasing internment camp, and eventual escape. Tadej’s reminiscences, which included his recounting of his friend’s internment, were published in the Croatian language in 1966. They reveal that the internment story in Canada was not only about the imprisonment and forced labour of individuals from affected communities. Many immigrants who successfully crossed into the United States ended up staying there, raising families and becoming American citizens.1
I had been an uninvited guest on a Canadian Pacific Railway freight train for a month as it rolled all the way from British Columbia to the outskirts of Port Arthur [today part of Thunder Bay, Ontario]. I jumped off the train as soon as it approached the yard of a house that was frequented by many young men during those summer days [of 1915].

Hearing our language being spoken, I came closer and introduced myself. These were young men from the regions of Herzegovina and Bosnia who during that era were often referred to by Canadian authorities as “Austrians.” Following an exchange of questions, they invited me into their home, fed me and offered me their hospitality. From that moment a friendship developed between us and especially with Luka Ćalić. He and I became inseparable and together sought work and adventure on the streets of Port Arthur, a small town of some 10,000 people in 1915.

Canada was already engaged in the world slaughter [the First World War], so it did not look too kindly on those of us who were from Austria-Hungary. We had to register as ‘enemy aliens’. That spring one could not find work to cover one’s basic needs, so the men rested, fell into debt and waited for the opening of the waterways in order to earn a living as dock workers.

My new friends found me a boarding house on Manitou Street owned by a certain Barbić while Luka lived on Lake Street at some Šepić woman’s place. She always placed her freshly baked bread out in the sun so that the boarders would eat less of it. In order to pay our room
and board, Luka and I would go from house to house in the wealthier section of town in order to earn a few cents by sawing and chopping wood, cleaning [furnace] ashes from basements, and other similar jobs. Things went this way until we found work at St. Joseph’s Hospital for eight dollars a month, plus room and board. However, we searched for something better and after “looking around” a little, found it. Luka found work at the Merryday Hotel, while I found work at the Prince Arthur Hotel for a monthly pay of thirty dollars, including room and board. So we felt like real fat cats.

When the shipping lanes opened up, some of our guys went to look for work at the docks and were refused. A short time later, several of them were arrested and sent to a camp near Kapuskasing. In order to evade apprehension, several of us caught a freight train to Fort Frances and from there we took a raft across the [Rainy] River to Minnesota. Luka, who had eyes for a local girl, stayed behind in the hope that authorities would not notice him.

Some twenty-three years passed since that time. I tried to get into contact with Luka over the years, but never succeeded. I lost all trace of him. Then in 1938 I happened to drift into Lackawanna, [New York] and to my utter surprise I ran into him in the middle of the street and our old friendship was again renewed. He invited me to the boarding house where he lived and after treating me to refreshments...
he responded to my questions and relayed to me his experiences through all these years that have rushed past:

“You don’t know that I was a prisoner of war even though I wasn’t in the war,” recounted Luka. “As God is my witness, I was, but I also escaped one rainy day. But, let me start from the beginning!

“You know, I wanted to take off [for Minnesota] with you, but I fell in love with that young lady and I couldn’t leave her. You knew her. She was so beautiful and she sang like a nightingale. Yes, like a nightingale because I could neither understand nightingales, nor her, as she sang in French.

“You know, the two of us fell in love like two darling doves and me being so enraptured, I promised to marry her on the spot. And right then and there she decided on the date, place and arrangements for the wedding, and I just nodded my head in agreement.

“The closer the wedding day approached the heavier was my heart, for as a man of honour I always kept my word; that’s almost always. The thought of how I could extricate myself from this promise kept nagging at me, especially since I’d already promised my hand in marriage to another girl, but that was long ago. That was in the second grade back in the homeland. The two of us fell in love...but where have I strayed?

“Yes, the wedding day approached closer and closer and a horror gripped me as I recalled how my friend kept carping at me: ‘You’re still a wet-nosed kid. You’re not ready for a wife. You should wait another ten years to become more mature.’ This is what he kept saying to me.
“A few days before the wedding, I was anxiously pacing back and forth in my room and for the tenth time counted the change in my pocket as I attempted to estimate how far a train would take me with this money. All of a sudden someone banged sharply on the door. I thought with a sense of trepidation who it could be and then opened the door and in front of me stood a policeman. This cheered me up. He asked for my name and ordered me to come with him.

“As I walked alongside him, a battle waged inside of me between the desire to be imprisoned for several years so that I wouldn’t have to get married, and the fear that I would never again see the woman that I loved. I asked the officer what I’d done and he replied that I didn’t register as an enemy alien and would have to spend the rest of the war in captivity unless a judge said otherwise. As soon as I entered the jail, I saw Grgo as he sat dejected with his head held low. As soon as he saw me he jumped up and asked if I had any tobacco.

“Over the course of the next few hours several more ‘criminals’ were rounded up and with them Jure, who lived at the Bakić place on Cumberland. We were happy not to be alone and chatted as if we were guests at a banquet, except that now and again I was tormented by the thought that I would have to leave my love behind.

“Three days later we arrived at [Kapuskasing] camp. Already from a distance we could hear the sound of the impact of axes and sledgehammers, and when we came out of the woods and into the clearing we saw many people working on the road and surrounding them were soldiers with bayonets fixed.

“They assigned us bunks like the ones found in lumber camps and we quickly grabbed a few bits of food from the austere selection prior to nightfall. That first night we slept like logs [from exhaustion] as we weren’t yet worn-out by worries. In the morning around six o’clock the soldiers woke us up and after a miserable breakfast they drove us off to work. Lunch consisted of boiled fish without any taste whatsoever and for supper the very same: fish and a piece of bread, and a cup of weak tea without sugar.

“We ate fish for an entire three-month period and it was due to that fish and the desire for my fiancée that the thought of escape took root. I informed my friends about my intention and after a brief discussion we agreed to attempt to escape during the first heavy rainfall when the guards wouldn’t be as careful. We didn’t have to wait too long. Late one afternoon a heavy fall rainfall accompanied by thunder,
struck. In the dark we gathered our things, wrapped them in pieces of cloth and snuck away into the night toward the barbed wire fence under which there was a two-foot deep and two-foot wide trench. Although it was full of water, we plunged into it and somehow came out the other side without getting separated. We then headed off into the forest and wandered through it the entire night without a precise destination.12

“At one point I stopped, filled my pipe with tobacco, lit it up and took a gulp from a cup of some homemade concoction and said [to my companions]: ‘You know, when I think about it, I have to laugh. Just think about it. The rain’s been pouring down all night, but that didn’t bother us since we were already completely soaked before we even left and despite being in mud up to our knees in this swamp in the middle of the night, and despite my chattering teeth, an irresistibly maddening craving for cheese has gripped me. That’s right, for cheese, even though I can’t stand cheese.’

“Finally, dawn arrived and the rain had subsided to a drizzle and luckily we felt solid ground under foot. Soon we succeeded in locating a small knoll where we began to dry ourselves up beside a fire we managed to start with great difficulty. At last we fell into a dead sleep until evening. As soon as it again cooled down, we departed and after a few hours reached a fairly wide river that crept between the ravines and gorges. All of a sudden, our attention was aroused when we noticed the reflection of a fire off into the darkness. We took a quick look and sure enough, a few miles up along the river on the opposite shore we saw a
fire ablaze with many people gathered around it. The scent of roasted meat reached us. We gathered some dry grass, lit it up and called out to those from the opposite shore and got their attention.

“Two of them got up, climbed into a canoe and paddled toward us. They were Native Indians and one among them spoke English. We explained to him our situation and intention, and after they conversed amongst themselves, they agreed to bring us over to their camp. There they fed us and otherwise showed us kindness. We sensed that the women—there were three—were looking over as if they wanted something from us. With the help of these women, we convinced the Native men to take us by canoe over to the railway station. We finally made it, but only through bribes. One of the women wanted my large nickel-plated watch, another wanted Jure’s leather buttons off his shirt and the third Grgo’s very unusual hat. However, their male companions wanted dollars and thus we took leave of all our valuables.

“With much effort and despite the maelstrom and turbulence, despite the danger all around us, we finally reached the railway station already on our second day.

“We thanked the Natives and went further off along the railway track until we ran into a railway cabin. We entered in and made use of its supply of bread, bacon and other edibles, and we also found a fair quantity of tobacco. Thus enriched, we went off into the forest to treat ourselves.

“The following day we caught a freight train and headed back to Port Arthur, back to the town from which they sent us to the internment camp.13

“As soon as I arrived in Port Arthur I sought out my fiancée, but couldn’t find her. I then went to my previous employer who happily accepted me back, offered me my previous job and scolded the authorities for persecuting innocent people.

“A short time after that, the government scaled back its efforts in this area. The [American-based] National Croatian Society helped a great deal in this regard with its appeal to the Canadian government following the visit of its President Josip Marohnić to this camp.14

“In spring 1916 I received some money from a friend in Wisconsin and went across the border and later I settled here [in Lackawanna], where I am today.”

And your fiancée? What happened to her? I asked.

“My fiancée? Oh, yes...” he turned to the second last door and yelled, “Hey, old lady, this man’s asking for you. Come here so I can introduce you.”
Endnotes

The translator wishes to thank Curator Julie Latimer of the Ron Morel Memorial Museum in Kapuskasing and Director/Curator Tory Tronrud of the Thunder Bay Museum for their assistance and permission to include the accompanying photographs from the archival collections of their respective institutions. He would also like to thank Richard Mastrangelo of the City of Thunder Bay Archives and Records for his assistance and Frank Jankać, public historian and principal of the Croatian Canadian Internment Project, with whom he conducted research at the Ron Morel Memorial Museum, the Thunder Bay Museum, and the City of Thunder Bay Archives and Records Centre.


2 In late 1914 the influx of unemployed men from the western provinces to Fort William and Port Arthur became so acute that local leaders began writing to the provincial government seeking help to deal with the situation. City of Thunder Bay Archives (hereafter TBA), series 4, 0121-10, file 1020 War 1914–16, letter from Fort William Mayor S.C. Young to the Provincial Secretary dated 21 November 1914. Other cities and towns faced the same challenge in providing relief for unemployed aliens. “Alien Wanderers: Emerson Grows Tired of Providing for 200 Austrians Who Tramped from Winnipeg,” The Daily Colonist (Victoria, BC), 18 May 1915, 3.

3 Since Croats lived in what was then Austria-Hungary, Canadian immigration, port, border, police, and other government officials typically identified them as “Austrians.” When discussing the issue of enemy aliens and internment, the local Fort William and Port Arthur press usually referred to the different immigrant groups from Austria-Hungary simply as “Austrians.” “Hostile Aliens to Be Under Surveillance in Concentration Camps,” Daily Times-Journal (Fort William) hereafter DTJ, 7 November 1914, 2; “100 Are Refused Naturalization,” Port Arthur Daily News (Port Arthur) hereafter DN, 10 November 1914, 2; “City Council Wants Government to Get Registration of All Subjects of Countries at War with Britain,” DTJ, 11 November 1914, 3; “Relief Report Shows Three-Quarters Cases Are Among Austrians,” DTJ, 8 December 1914, 1; “Send Austrians to the Abitibi,” DN, 14 January 1915, 2.

4 In 1914 the neighbouring town of Fort William had 2,270 registered enemy aliens. This constituted nine percent of the town’s total population of 24,071. The vast majority of these enemy aliens (2,078) were members of various ethnic groups that emigrated from Austria-Hungary. In June 1915 there were 3,216 enemy aliens registered in Fort William. The number increased to 3,450 in late 1916. The following two years approximately 2,000 enemy aliens reported monthly. TBA, series 4, 0089-21, file 732 Mayor Young 1913–16, letter from Fort William Mayor S.C. Young to Minister of Militia Major General Sam Hughes dated 27 November 1914; TBA, series 4, 0002-01, file Aliens 1913–15, The Committee re Aliens report to Fort William Mayor and City Council on the enemy alien situation in Fort William dated 25 June 1915; Gerald G. Ross, “Fort William’s Enemy Alien Problem during the First World War,” Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers & Records 22 (1994), 7.
Single male Croatian immigrants tended to live at boarding houses that were run by more established Croatian immigrant husband and wife teams in the southern section of Port Arthur at the Lake and Manitou Street intersection. The names Andrea Berzovich, Steve Barbich, Mike Biluschick (Buchkick) and John Pavlichick, as well as the Horvatski [Croatian] Boarding House were all listed at residences from 14 through to 28 Lake Street. See the 1914 Port Arthur town directory accessed at the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society (hereafter TBHMS). 

From December 1914 to summer 1915 the city councils and boards of trade of Fort William and Port Arthur unsuccessfully lobbied the federal government to establish an internment camp in their district that would intern all enemy aliens. The primary motivations appeared to have been to remove enemy aliens off of municipal relief, to deal with the unemployment situation and to clear land and establish 500 to 700 family homesteads that would benefit the economic development of the two towns. TBA, series 4, 0002-01, file Aliens 1913–15, letter sent by the mayors of Fort William and Port Arthur and the local board of trade to the Minister of Justice dated 25 July 1915; TBA, series 4, 0002-01, file Aliens 1913–15, letter from the Commanding Officer of Internment Operations Major General Otter to Fort William Mayor dated 17 November 1915; “Interning Station to Be Established Here,” DN, 6 January 1915, 1; “1500 Prisoners of War Are to Be Kept Here,” DN, 11 January 1915, 1; “Gen. Otter Tells Daily News of Arrangements for Interning Camps” and “General Otter in Conference with Civic Officials,” DN, 18 January 1915, 1, 4 and 5; “No Place to Put Interned Aliens to East of City,” DN, 26 January 1915, 6; Ross, “Fort William’s Enemy Alien,” 9-18.

In a 1915 report to the special committee struck by the Fort William City Council to look into the enemy alien question, the town’s acting chief of police acknowledged that some local enemy aliens were escaping to the United States. TBA, series 4, 0002-01, file Aliens 1913–15, letter from acting Fort William Chief of Police C.E. Watkins to Chair of the Committee re Aliens J.T. Horne dated 25 June 1915. It should be noted that groups of Croats in other parts of the country also attempted to escape the internment dragnet in Canada. Joseph Pavelich of Ironton, Minnesota relayed in 1968 how he, Frank Vukelich, and several others who resided in British Columbia escaped across the border. They walked over 300 km carrying everything they owned on their backs all the way from the village of Clinton (approximately 120 km northwest of Kamloops) to Vancouver and then across the border to freedom in the United States. Joseph Pavelich, “Frank Vukelich,” Zajedničar (Pittsburgh), 13 November 1968, 11.

Throughout the war, un-naturalized immigrants from countries that made up the Central Powers who failed to register or report to local authorities as enemy aliens were subject to arrest. In Port Arthur many of these types of arrests occurred from 1917 to 1919. TBHMS, G4 1/5/12, “Return of Convictions made... for the City of Port Arthur,” from 1914 to 1921.

The personal name Grgo corresponds to Gregory and was common to Croatian Catholics who lived along the coastal and hinterland regions of Croatia, as well as those who lived in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The personal name Jure corresponds to George and was common to Croatian Catholics who lived in the hinterland regions of Croatia and in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Kapuskasing internment camp operated from 1914 to 1920. It was envisioned that the internees would be housed at an old construction camp at Hearst, but the special train transporting
the guards and eighty prisoners in December 1914 ran into bad weather. It was -40 degrees Celsius and the train had to plough through snow a meter deep. As a result, it stopped on the railway line at MacPherson Section House near Kapuskasing River, approximately 120 km west of Cochrane. The decision was then made by the commanding officer to establish a camp in the nearby forest along the river that became known as Kapuskasing Camp. The internees were without winter clothing, gloves or boots, yet had to clear the land and build the camp. The ordeal in establishing the camp is detailed by its first commanding officer. Ron Morel Memorial Museum, Internment Operations / Internee Documents, "Memoirs of Col. Frederick Fieldhouse Clarke, M.B.E., D.S.O and Bar, V.D.,” manuscript, pp. 37-40.

12 Another Croat who succeeded in escaping his internment was Misko Musa. Musa immigrated to Canada in 1913 to join his father Bariša who lived in Port Arthur. Both were employed in the forestry sector when war broke out and were arrested and interned. One night Misko escaped from behind the barbed wire of his internment camp and lived under an assumed name. He then crossed into the United States and eventually settled in Chicago where he passed away in 1970. Steve Zelenika, “Misko Musa,” Z, 29 May 1970, 11.

13 Not all Croats who attempted to escape internment were successful. In mid-September 1914, Mike Orlich was arrested in Sidney, BC when he attempted to acquire a boat for himself and eighteen others to cross into the United States. Raspovich, For a Better Life, 77.

14 When American-based ethnic mutual benefit societies learned about the internment in Canada, they attempted to intervene to assist their members. Pittsburgh's National Croatian Society (NCS) established its first Canadian-based lodge in the BC town of Ladysmith in 1903. Soon after, lodges appeared in the BC towns of Trail and Grand Forks. A lodge was also set up in Welland, Ontario in 1909, but it completely disintegrated during the war due to the internment operations. The NCS's president came to Canada in early June 1915 and toured the Petawawa, Kingston (Fort Henry) and Kapuskasing internment camps. Stan Granic, “The Intervention of Pittsburgh's National Croatian Society during Canada's First World War Internment,” paper presented on 17 October 2014 at the symposium "Canada, the Great War and the Internment of Enemy Aliens, 1914–1920" in Banff, Alberta and sponsored by the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies and the Kule Centre for Ukrainian Studies at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, both at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta. It should be noted that most Croatian immigrants then in Canada were not members of the NCS and some continued to be held until 1920. Several also died while incarcerated during the internment operations. Four of them—Ignac Kalcina (Ignacio Kalceina), Ivan Jelic (John Jellicky), Mijo Mateljan (Mike Muttohiba), and Karl Burul (Charles Borro)—were among the twenty-one internees who died at Kapuskasing internment camp. Research on the correct names and identities of internees who died at the Kapuskasing internment camp and were buried in the camp's graveyard was conducted by Frank Jankać on behalf of the Ron Morel Memorial Museum and the Town of Kapuskasing under the direction of Curator Julie Latimer for the new gravestone markers unveiled on 13 October 2011. Julie Latimer, "Old News: A Little Bit of Local History," The Northern Times (Kapuskasing, ON), 12 October 2011, 5; Frank Jankać, "Giving Voice to the ‘Other Europeans’: Rethinking Internment through the Kapuskasing Cemetery Rehabilitation Project,” paper presented 18 October 2014 at the symposium "Canada, the Great War and the Internment of Enemy Aliens, 1914–1920.”
The Red Rock Historical Society Celebrates Fifteen Years

by Marilyn Young

It is very hard to believe that the Red Rock Historical Society is about to celebrate its 15th anniversary. Wow where did the time go! In fifteen years, a small group of dedicated people have accomplished great things. The group has worked very hard to collect and preserve the history of Red Rock, at the same time sharing that history with citizens past and present who call Red Rock home.

In the spring of 2000, a group of people interested in having a formal organization in charge of preserving artifacts and archives of Red Rock met and decided to form a Historical Society to do just that. Within a few months, the Society had a mandate, a constitution and a mission statement. Letters were sent to past residents telling them about the Society and how they could join. The response was overwhelming; over 500 Charter Memberships were sold. We keep members informed about Society activities with twice yearly newsletters.

In 2001, the Society was incorporated and we were off and running. Our major focus has been the collection of photos and memorabilia. We have had a wonderful response from the community; they have been very generous and as a result we have a wonderful collection.

Over the years the society has undertaken a number of fundraising projects all with a focus on the history of Red Rock. The first big
project started in 2002 when we designed and produced a historical calendar. Each year had a different theme, one year was sports, one was schools, and one was street scenes. Due to lack of sales, we stopped producing the calendars in 2005. But you never know we might give it another try in the future.

The next big challenge was the Red Rock Tapestry. Historical photos, including the Red Rock Inn, the Quebec Lodge and the Red Rock Questa, were selected and submitted to a company that wove the images into a beautiful 4X6 tapestry. The tapestries have been so popular, we always have some available for sale.

One of the things members felt was very important was preserving the memories of long-time residents. So in 2005 we were successful our bid to get a grant to help with this project. The money was used to hire staff to conduct and record interviews with as many seniors as possible. Needless to say there are some wonderful stories now available to future generations.

In addition to preserving personal histories, members thought it would be a good idea to make information available about the various buildings in town so short histories were composed and pictures collected. Historical signs were also produced and a walking tour was designed. Thirty sites around town have signs with photos and information about them. An accompanying brochure with a map and information was produced to show where the signs were located.

Our latest and greatest venture is a historical DVD. It is the story of Red Rock and surrounding area, from early times when natives first settled here to the present day. It chronicles the early Finnish settlers who farmed on the Five Mile Road, then the building of the Mill and the clearing of the town site in 1937. It tells about Camp R, the Prisoner of War camp that

The Red Rock Interpretive Centre was officially opened in May 2015. Its interactive exhibits tell the story of the community.
housed 1,145 prisoners for eighteen months in 1940-41. The story goes on to tell about the growth of the community in the ’50s and ’60s. It follows the story of paper making over the years and about the beautiful Red Rock Marina and Pul-a-Log Park. Mostly it tells about the essence of a community that thrives on volunteerism and community spirit.

Who knows what the next big challenge will be, I’m sure someone will come up with another great idea and members will be off and running again. Speaking of members, the Society needs more volunteers, especially people who are willing to sit on the Executive and come to those dreaded meetings! If you are interested, you would be most welcome. The Society needs you.

In 2012 members of the Society were invited to be part of a steering committee planning the Interpretive Centre in the new Marina Centre at the waterfront. The Society played a huge role in this project, providing both information and photos to be used in the displays. After many meetings and much hard work the Centre was officially opened in May 2015 and it is fantastic. The interactive exhibits tell the story of Red Rock. There are areas dedicated to different aspects of the town’s history.

Always striving to fulfill our Mission Statement—“the preservation of the past for the enrichment of the future”—the society embarked on a very ambitious archival project that involved the cataloguing, duplicating and archiving our very extensive collection of photos, artifacts and memorabilia. A grant from the provincial government enabled us to hire a qualified person to undertake this huge project. Having a database has meant that The Red Rock Tapestry includes historical photos, such as the Red Rock Inn, the Quebec Lodge and the Red Rock Questa, woven into a beautiful 4X6 tapestry.
the collection is more easily accessed and also preserved for future generations.

In 2013, the Society hosted a very unique fundraiser. We held the first ever Trinkets and Treasures Road Show. Fashioned after the famous Antiques Road Show we invited people to bring items to be appraised by antique dealers from Thunder Bay. Our goal was to involve all the communities on the north shore and we did have participants from several communities. The day included vendors selling their products, a vintage fashion show as well as the appraisers. At the show we also drew the winning ticket on our beautiful Historical Photo Quilt, which was made and donated by one of our members and featured vintage photos of Red Rock. What a unique treasure to win. What a great day. It was far more successful than we had ever anticipated and we had nothing but rave reviews from everyone who attended.

Who knows what our next big challenge will be? No doubt someone will come up with another fabulous idea and we will be off and running. We all feel it is important to keep the Society viable as it performs a valuable service to the community, not only highlighting the past but also continuing to chronicle the present and the future.
Recent Works on Northern Ontario
Compiled by Jenna Kirker


A Letter from the President
by Frank Gerry

As President of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society it gives me great pleasure to give this short report to the membership.

I would like to again thank the board for their support and dedication on all fronts for without them my job as President would be impossible. They all bring their individual skills and strengths to the board and it is very much appreciated. This year one long-time board member leave and new replacement come on. Tine Bucknell has us but continues to help at the Museum selling tickets and working bingos. She was on the board for over 20 years and served under various capacities. She was both first vice and fundraising chair for many years as well as being a steadfast volunteer. We will miss Tine and wish good luck in her future endeavours. Our newest board member is Jenna Kirker a Lakehead University history student who will be serving a one-year term.

This year’s raffle car, a 1972 Corvette, was virtually sold out and thanks goes out to all of the volunteers who sold the tickets at the various locations. Thanks as well to Christine Bruce for running the raffle so smoothly once again. Tory also deserves the credit for finding another very desirable car. In keeping with fundraising and special events the annual Victorian Tea was again a success and not only raised money but encouraged people to visit our Museum, some of them for the first time. Ours is the “original” Victorian Tea and definitely has the best atmosphere. A team of over 40 volunteers (plus board members) and all of the people who help by supplying baking deserves a lot of credit for the tea is truly a team effort. Thanks to all of you.

Tory’s Director’s Report will outline
in more detail what has been happening this past year and I would again like to stress that the Museum’s staff deserves a great deal of credit for what was accomplished over the past year. The biggest staff change was losing Monica Belluz, our long time front desk greeter/receptionist, who is now working in Southern Ontario; she was replaced by Kathleen Niven.

I would especially like to thank the City of Thunder Bay as well as various foundations and senior levels of government for their ongoing support over the past year. We continue and will continue to use their money wisely in the preservation of our historical past.

Report of the Director/Curator

by Tory Tronrud

Several new exhibits were mounted in 2016 including a fibre arts display of wall hangings (below), handcrafted using traditional rug hooking techniques, and focussed primarily on the subject of barns. This exhibit, shown in the summer months, was produced by the Huronia Branch of the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild in collaboration with the Simcoe County Museum. It commemorated the rural roots of both Ontario and, as it was supplemented by agriculturally-related artifacts from our own collections, the Northwest. We were also pleased in 2016 to create an exhibit commemorating the long history of Rotary Clubs in the city and district, and we hosted one that highlighted the many contributions of Ontario’s francophone communities.

Our 2015 exhibit on the History of Medicine in Thunder Bay continued into the new year in a variety of venues, such as the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and the offices of WSP Canada, Consulting Engineers. As usual extension exhibits can also be seen at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay Airport and Confer-
In the summers of 2015-16, student Kate Beaulieu took the lead in our walking tours of both the Fort William and Port Arthur downtown cores. Attendees learned all about murders, railways, grave robberies, houses of ill repute, and other intriguing tales. Each tour was about 1.5 km long and took around 90 minutes to deliver.

This underlines the network of partnerships we have developed over the years with other museums, arts organizations, businesses, school boards, and governments. We also partnered once again with Big Boreal Adventure on their creation of another walking tour guide book.

So popular were our own walking tours in 2015 that we created several new ones and offered tours right through the summer and into autumn. Summer student Kate Beaulieu again spearheaded this project.

Our travelling exhibit, *What Lies Beneath: Shipwrecks of Lake Superior*, began its tour of museums with a stop in Peterborough, the first of many stops over the next few years.

With the aid of a high school student we completed the digitization of all the First World War newspapers, which are now available for researchers to consult in our reading room. To date we have newspapers in digital form from 1875 right through to June of 1933 with plans for more to come. The acquisition of a new book scanner also made possible the digitization of the honours and awards book of the 52nd Battalion, one part of our contribution to the city’s First World War commemoration. The other will be a book on Thunder Bay during the war, to be published in 2017-18.

One of the major events of last year was the sudden collapse of our elevator. It’s hard to prepare for such things and we went for many weeks without a working elevator. We got it running again but replacement was deemed necessary. Thanks to the Federal Government’s Enabling Accessibility Fund, the John Andrews Foundation and the Shirley and James Symington Family Fund, as well as...
Elevator workers from Thyssen Krupp install the controls for the Museum’s new elevator. Last year was a good one for grants. The cost of our elevator retrofit was covered in large part by a grant of $50,000 from Employment and Social Development Canada through its Enabling Accessibility in Communities program. The Shirley and James Symington Fund and the John Andrews Foundation also made grants to the Museum that helped make this project a reality.

all those members of the Museum who donated towards the cause, the money for the elevator retrofit was raised and the replacement was in working order by September 2016.

New to us in 2015-16 was the dawn of our Flickr account which, in combination with our Facebook page and Twitter account, has drawn in a whole new social media audience. Over 1,000 images have been loaded onto Flickr to date.

I would be remiss in not recognizing the hard work of the

Nick Sottile presents David Manser of Thunder Bay with the keys to the 1982 Corvette Stingray that he and his wife Barbara won in our 2016 raffle. Of the 13,000 tickets printed, all but 125 were sold making this our most successful raffle yet in terms of funds raised. Thanks are due to our many volunteers: Christiana Bruce, our raffle coordinator; the Museum’s staff; and our many sponsors: Badanai Motors, The Parts Source, Crystal Beach Variety, Eat Gay’s Auto, Red Oak’s Barbershop, Papa Piccolinos, Boston Pizza, Galaxy Lanes, Pizza Hut, Tim Hortons, A&W, Little Caesars, Joey’s Seafood, Extreme Pita, David’s Tea, East Coast Lobster, New York Fries, Applebees, Renco Foods, Westfort Foods, Safeway, Party City, Gino’s Pizza, Merla-Mae, Subway, Tim’s Whole Health, Domino’s Pizza, Shopper’s Drug Mart, Golden Bakery, Pita Pit, Superior Bowladrome, Vitality Natural Food Market, and Pizza Pizza.
Left: After twenty years on the board of directors, Tine Bucknell retired in March. She began as a volunteer front desk attendant before moving on to the board where she rose to First Vice President. Tine also chaired a number of committees, particularly fundraising and special events, which put her in charge of our bingos and car raffles. Her committee’s work on our raffles raised close to $400,000 for our capital and operating budgets. Though retired, Tine is not lost to us; she continues to volunteer.

was raffled very successfully in early September.

Following a major upgrade of our library in 2014, when we replaced folding tables and stackable chairs with oak furnishings, we were successful in acquiring a Documentary Heritage Communities Program grant late in 2015 to finally change over our old card catalogue to a new computerized database. Terry Yahn did a superb job of transferring the data.

Thanks to our hard-working Plaques and Programs Committee, some great lectures were presented over the past year, including: “When the Noronic Burned in Toronto” by Tim Irish, a “History of HMCS Griffin” by Donetta Rasmussen, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe:
Global and Historical Perpectives” by Steven Jobbitt, and “Aviation in Northwestern Ontario” by Liz Wieben

To commemorate the centenary of the First World War, the Society began its On This Day in History (OTD) tweets in late February 2016. Using the 52nd Battalion’s War Diary as source material, we sent out a message at 11:00 a.m. each day, summarizing troop movements, training, battles, casualty reports, etc.

For several years now we’ve made presentations for seniors in nursing homes—what we term our Senior’s Reminiscence Program. In December, the Thunder Bay Community Foundation Fund granted us $3,456 to assist with the delivery of these programs in 2016. For much of the year Diane Robnik filled this position but, when she moved on to full-time employment, Meaghan Dunn took

Through Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs, we hired eight summer students: Aggie Job, Ashley Bjorklund and Cassandra Davidson (all children’s camps for); Emily Tilbury (weekend receptionist); and, pictured here, (left to right): Erin Wark (photo digitization); Tobyn Leyland (artifact cataloguing); Kate Beaulieu (outreach); and Alanna Buso (historical writer).

Kathleen Niven (right) took over in June as the Museum’s front desk receptionist and gift shop attendant. She replaced Monica Belluz who moved to Niagara Falls after 23 years on the job. We were sorry to see her go and wish her well. Kathleen has a diploma from Fanshaw College in Retail Management and Merchandizing. She’s also worked at the Gap Factory and Home Outfitters, and has managed the Fox on the Run restaurant.
About 350 people attended our 26th annual Victorian Tea in November 2015. Events such as this require the help of a many volunteers to carry out such tasks as serving tables, washing dishes, baking sweets, pouring tea, seating people, taking pictures, and, as seen here, preparing and selling scones. Particular thanks goes out to Queen Victoria, Sharon Diem and to the one who coordinates it all, Margaret Gerry.

Over. The grant has helped us raise the number of homes involved in the program to record levels.

Last year, Breanne Olsen, the Museum’s Registrar, was awarded a Certificate in Museum Studies through the Ontario Museums Association after successfully completing all the required course work. She has been working with us since 2008.

Dave Battistel was the recipient of the Professor Ken Dawson Research Trust bursary for 2016. The bursary helped offset the costs of Dave’s research trip to

La Crosse, Wisconsin, where he delved into the records of Frank Hixon, of the Pigeon River Lumber Company, a treasure trove of information about Northwestern

Christina Bruce (right), our car raffle coordinator, greets Marjorie Payetta, one of our most faithful volunteers at this year’s raffle.
Ontario’s early timber and railway industries. The bursary is designed to facilitate research into Northwestern Ontario’s past. In 2015, Prof. Beverly Soloway of Lakehead University was the recipient of the award to aid in her research into the history and significance of Highway 61, once called the Scott Highway; she intends to turn her findings into a future article for the *Papers & Records*.

Ken Boshcoff (left), our newest life member, agreed to sign our spring fundraising appeal letter. Here he and Museum Director Tory Tronrud view the Terry Fox exhibit, a national travelling display that the City of Thunder Bay helped bring to the city.

We thank the Province of Ontario for ongoing support through its museum and historical society funding programs (CMOG and HODG). The City of Thunder Bay remains our biggest supporter, having contributed a substantial portion of our operating budget again in 2015.

These are just a few of the highlights of a busy year. As usual, I need to thank my colleagues Jeff “Warrior” is just one of over a dozen fabulous art figures created by local artist Janet Hannam as part of her travelling exhibit called *The Gifts of the North*. The colourful figures travelled across southern Ontario a few years ago in an attempt to explain the spirit of Northern Ontario to southern audiences. Janet donated these amazing artifacts to the Museum in 2016.
This steam wagon was built by the famous Mamod company of Birmingham, Great Britain. The same firm, founded in 1937 and still in business today, made buses, farm tractors and fire engines, to name just a few, all of which were powered by live steam.

Sumner, Margaret Hartviksen, Karen Bortolin, Monica Belluz (who left us in 2016 and was replaced by Kathleen Niven), Breanne Olsen, Nick Sottile and Catherine Caughell. The board as well must be thanked for their support and oversight. Our funders and volunteers remain dear to us. Thanks to all of you. I look forward to another year of achievement.
Harry Kirk was born in Fort William in 1933, the son of Florence and Thomas, and educated at Francis Street School and Fort William Collegiate. Even at a boy, Harry had mapped out his career; he wanted to move into the family business. That business was the City of Fort William. Both his father and grandfather had served as superintendents of cemeteries for the City, but Harry had set his eyes on a different job – he wanted to be City Clerk. As a child, he used to visit city hall with his father and, as he later said, “I recall seeing Dan Martin and Alex McNaughten [both City Clerks]... The whole atmosphere intrigued me. It was something that stayed with me.”

In the mid-1950s, after a stint with the Air Force, Harry took a job with the Dominion welfare department, but soon transferred to the City’s department of welfare to work as a field inspector. With his foot in the door of city hall, he quickly moved through the ranks of various departments, from social services to utilities and then to treasury—learning a lot along the way—before becoming Deputy City Clerk in 1965.

At the City of Fort William, city clerks were usually hired for life, or at least until they retired. Alexander McNaughten, for example, served for 45 years, his successor, Dan Martin, for 20, and Harry worked as Donald Morris’s deputy for 16 years before assuming the top job himself, a position he held until retirement at the end of 1993.

In the city clerk’s office, Harry Kirk had many portfolios and he expressed pride in the work he did on amalgamation, the creation of Thunder Bay’s coat of arms and flag, and the smooth running of civic elections. The historical community, however, will remember him most for the creation of the City Archives and Records Centre, which was named after him in 2015. Harry had a deep appreciation for the municipal records in his care. He kept them safe and he knew where all the important ones were but, as a delegation of the Historical Society once pointed out, they were scattered in rooms and offices across the city and dearly in need of a dedicated repository. Harry shared that concern and worked hard over the years to bring such a facility into being. His ultimate success was a crowning achievement in an illustrious career.

After he retired, Harry continued to serve the community on a variety of boards. He joined the Museum’s board in 2000 and served us well for a decade, offering wise advice based on his extensive experience and his knowledge of our city’s history.
On June 4, 2016, the world was robbed of an amazing musical talent and an exemplary human being. Bobby Curtola was born in 1943 in Fort William (not Port Arthur as is usually reported) to Mary and John Curtola; they lived at 603 McDonald Street in Fort William’s east end that year and later moved to 826 Simpson Street. But because John was working as a mechanic (and later service manager) at N.R. Wilson Motors on Van Norman and St. Paul Streets at the time, the family had moved to Port Arthur by 1946, taking up residence at 213 Stephen Street.

Bobby had a regular working-class upbringing, helping out as a teenager at Wilson Motors (the firm moved briefly to Memorial Avenue in 1957 but, by 1959, was back on Van Norman under new ownership). His true passion, however, was his music. At only 15, he was swept into show business.

Bobby began his musical career singing in the local church choir but he also showcased his dulcet tones at Lakeview High School dances and assemblies. He was backed by his band, The Bobcats, featuring Bobby on vocals, Ron Day on drums, Brian Merritt on rhythm guitar, Dave Turner on piano, and Al “Slats” Selic on lead guitar. Initially, Bobby was just looking to gain experience. “A few of us met up,” said Ron Day in 2016, “and we seemed to click and next thing you know we would practice down in my basement every chance we got.”

Though high school dances were their main venues, they sometimes played at the Coliseum, a large venue coveted by up-and-coming musicians. “We were there to have fun. We weren’t concerned about making money,” said Day. “It was all to do with our passion, [and especially] Bobby’s. His whole life was music and singing. He was a natural at it. When he was on stage he just seemed to glow from somewhere inside of him.”

Making it big, Bobby later said, was “an accident.” His high school performances happened to catch the attention of Port Arthur song-writing duo Basil and Dyer Hurdon, who, shortly after hearing him, signed Bobby to their small label, Tartan Records. Making it big did not involve the Bobcats, but “there were no hard feelings between the guys,” said Day. “We all knew Bobby was going places, it was only a matter of time.”

“Hand in Hand with You” was the first of many songs the Hurdon brothers penned...
for Bobby, and the innocent, saccharine lyrics of that first song (“Like the shore beside the sea, you must always stay by me”) were well-suited to Bobby’s boy-next-door image.

In a News-Chronicle interview the 16-year-old Bobby said of Hand in Hand with You: “I still can’t believe it. I’m sitting on the edge of my seat, waiting to see what happens when the record comes out.”

The Hurdon brothers orchestrated much of Bobby’s early success. They strategically mapped out his song choices and appearances. For a while, they steered Bobby away from the night-club circuit, wanting to perfectly time his entrance into these venues.

“The worst thing an artist can do is to play in nightclubs when he is mediocre,” Basil Hurdon said in 1967. “He’ll be finished in no time. An artist becomes great when he tours the clubs while he is at his peak.”

The Hurdons carefully marketed Bobby as the sweet, sincere, ideal ’60s beau and the fan craze that erupted were the result. It was Basil and Dyer who got the first chapter of the Bobby Curtola fan club off the ground; at the height of his fame, this cross-Canada network of fan clubs had more than 250,000 members. With his boyish, earnest appeal and wholesome, sweet sounding voice Bobby was a hit with young (largely female) audiences. And playing the Bob Hope Show in 1960 certainly didn’t hurt. Within the span of a few years, Bobby went from being a high school kid to finding himself the inciting force and centre of “Curtolamania.”

Another key to Curtola’s success was Vancouver radio DJ Red Robinson. He saw the potential for States-side success with Bobby’s song “Fortune Teller,” so he sent the tune to radio stations over the border. The song caught on and ended up selling over two million copies, making it Bobby’s biggest hit.

What followed made Curtola a true star—touring with Dick Clark and his Cavalcade of Stars, appearing on British television, recording the famous “Things go Better with Coca Cola” jingle, and co-writing “The Real Thing,” which became the basis for the Coke theme song. He also appeared on American Bandstand and the Wolfman Jack Show and hosted two Canadian television shows, the first recording artist to do so. In the 1970s, Bobby turned his focus to Las Vegas, signing a five-year contract worth millions, making him the “highest paid entertainer” in Canada. For decades he was a staple act in Vegas and starred at venues around the world.

For his tireless humanitarian work—he hosted numerous telethons, and started his own foundation to aid children in Equador—and for his contributions to Canadian music, Bobby Curtola was awarded the Order of Canada in 1998.

Bobby had more than two dozen Canadian gold singles and a career that lasted close to 60 years. He played at some of the world’s biggest venues, but he never forgot his Northwestern Ontario roots, returning frequently and playing for local audiences, doing what he loved best.

Bobby Curtola died on June 4, 2016. He graced our ears with his music, stole the hearts of young and old alike, and captured the imaginations of small town artists aspiring to make it big.