



The Kawartha Periodical



Newsletter of the Kawartha Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada
Web site: <<http://www.uelac.org/Kawartha>>

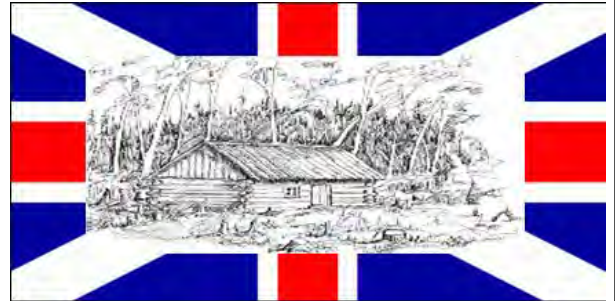
Volume 24, Issue 02 *The Kawartha Branch was granted its charter on 23 June 1979* Fall 2024 / Winter 2025

Supplemental Issue



Following the publication and distribution of *The Kawartha Periodical*, Volume 24, Issue 02,

Fall 2024 / Winter 2025, an Honourary Member of Kawartha Branch, Ken Armstrong, wrote this article that I know many of you will find most interesting reading !!!



THE SEAWAY AND ME!

At 0800 hours on a warm, bright sunny Tuesday morning, cofferdam A1, immediately west of Cornwall, was blown up. It was July 1, 1958, Dominion Day in Canada.



“Inundation Day - July 1, 1958.

The last cofferdam, between Barnhart and Sheek Islands, was breached by dynamite at 8:00 a.m. that morning.”

Source: archive.sdgcounties.ca/index.php/lvmc-mg-1-056

General View of Cornwall Canal, Cornwall, Ont., Canada.



Cornwall Canal



Clary Foran,
one of
the last canallers
using the
Cornwall Canal.

Dad and I were sitting at the dining-room table having our breakfast. I had just come off the night shift at the HSPM.

That blast heard throughout the area was the beginning and violent end for many who have lived along the St. Lawrence River. Many of the farms and homesteads dated back to 1783 and the settling of the United Empire Loyalists in the area. That huge dynamite blast changed forever those who had lived in the United Counties and especially those who lived in Stormont and Dundas Counties.

Thirty thousand acres of land were flooded to create the new Lake St Lawrence, the head-pond for the new power station west of Cornwall. 6,500 people lost their homes in Stormont and Dundas alone, as eight villages were directly affected in one way or another.

I grew up and received my early schooling in Cornwall, Ontario. For nineteen years the river was my playground, in both winter and summer. In late June, many of my classmates at Cornwall Public School would join me as we grabbed our bicycles and raced down to the canal.



TUNNEL UNDER CANAL

We would carefully wheel our bikes across the Lock Gates at Lock 21 and then enjoy the clear waters of the Bywash. In July and August the shore at Phillips Point would experience the same surge as kids sought the cool waters of the St Lawrence River.



Tunnel Under The Canal

Phillips Point was south-west of the Stormont Mill and south of the canal.



During the winter months Cornwallites would witness the labour-intensive work of ice-cutting at the foot of Amelia Street. The ice would be cut in large blocks and transported across Water Street by conveyor belt to the Ice House on the south-east corner of Amelia and Water streets. The ice blocks were then covered by sawdust for distribution during the summer.

During WW2 and immediately after, the canal became a treasure trove of RCN equipment. We had Fairmiles, or Q-boats, as they were then properly called, tie along the banks of the canal.

I even remember the German submarine, U 500, tied up overnight at the foot of Central Park on May 28th, 1954. It was on its way to a Chicago Museum of Natural History.

In addition, throughout the boating season, we witnessed constant traffic through the Cornwall Canal of Canallers carrying pulp, coal, fuel and grain to and from the Great Lakes.



By the way, the canal was built in 1842.

It was 11½ miles in length and had a breadth at the bottom of 100 feet and 150 feet at the top.

It was originally 9 feet deep but, later, it was deepened to 14 feet (1876-1904).

Sadly, only a small portion of the original canal now remains as it was filled in 1971 to create a waterfront park. Only a small section of the canal, from Cumberland to Lamoureux Park, remains.

It is a rather sad reminder that the city of Cornwall has struggled to retain any semblance of its rich historical heritage.

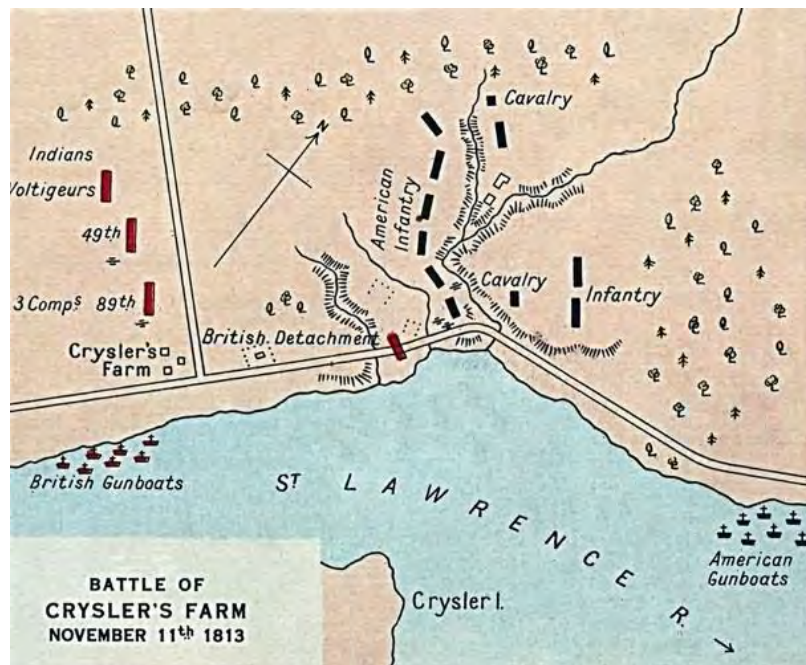
Witness the destruction of the Capitol Theatre in 1991, the Federal Post Office at Pitt and Second Streets in 1995, the old Public Library on the corner of Sydney and Second Streets in 1957, the Salvation Army Cathedral leveled in 1962, the Town Hall in 1963, amongst others!

I was born in the Cornwall General Hospital in 1935. Lorne Johnston of Moulinette was born at the same time and, as a result, our parents became friends. I spent many a time at the Johnstons in Moulinette, often staying overnight. My mind often reflects back to the drive home at night from Moulinette to Cornwall, along old Highway 2. The highway, at points, parallels the canal and I remember the magic of the streetlights glistening on the canal water while passing through Mille Roches.

When Moulinette was flooded, it had a population of 311 and Mille Roches had a population of 874 at the time of the flooding.

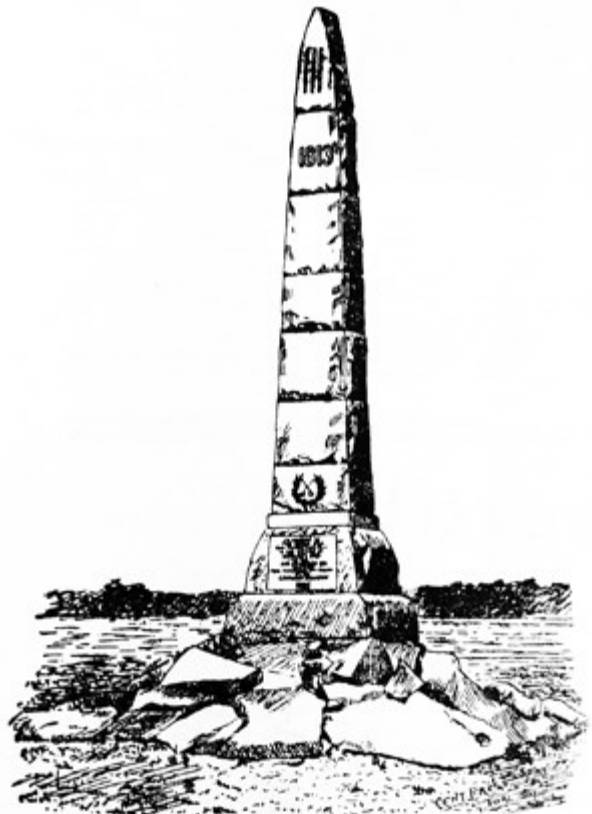
When Upper Canada Village was first being planned, it was proposed that selected buildings be moved to a chosen location to represent buildings that had been lost to the flooding.

One such building was the historic Christ Church in Moulinette. It had been built in 1837, the year of the Upper Canada Rebellion. It was one of the largest buildings moved to the Upper Canada Village site.



The flooded area also included Chrysler's Farm where a major battle had taken place during the War of 1812.

The monument commemorating that event was moved to Upper Canada Village where it now stands in majestic pleasure.



Another memory that stuck with me through the years was seeing and hearing the *Moccasin* speeding through the night heading to Montreal with its bright headlight cutting through the night sky.

On August 9th, 1958, the CPR *Moccasin* ceased to run as it was taken out of service. It had been the longest running CPR train running between Brockville and Montreal.



The tiny Moulinette Railway Station was moved to the Lost Villages Museum in 1995, another site, just west of Cornwall where another historic village reflecting the submerged villages was created.

The tiny Moulinette Station was built in 1910 and was opened to serve passengers on the Grand Trunk/ C.N.R. line.



Mille Roches was the home of my good friend, Bob McLellan. Bob and I were joined at the hip in Grade 13 at C CVS. Bob's job every night was to meet the *Moccasin* at the Mille Roches Station. As it slowed to pass through the small village, Bob would throw the mail aboard using a large fly net contraption. While the train was in transit the mail and packages were sorted for delivery the next day.



"MAIL SLEIGH"
USED TO HAUL MAIL BAGS
TO AND FROM POST OFFICE
AND RAILWAY STATION AT THE
VILLAGE OF "MILLE ROCHES"
- DONATED BY: JIM McLELLAN

In August, 1954, work began on the move to a new highway at Mille Roches. Directly across from Mille Roches was Sheek Island.

It was there that Camp Kagama was located and to which I attended in late 1947 and 1948.

The Camp was just west of Ault Park, a very popular recreation property overlooking the Long Sault Rapids. For example, on July 1st, 1954, two and a half thousand attended the annual HSPM picnic in the park.



CAMP KAGAMA

Camp Kagama was run by the YMCA and had two wooden buildings, one of which was used as a Dining Hall, the other a sleeping cabin, and two tent lines. We were able to swim just beside the raging rapids.

The whole island is now underwater due to the Seaway flooding.



**TURBULENT
ST. LAWRENCE
WATERS
WERE HARNESSSED.**

TURBULENT ST. LAWRENCE WATERS WERE HARNESSSED

Patterns In Rock
Modern Art ?
Not quite.

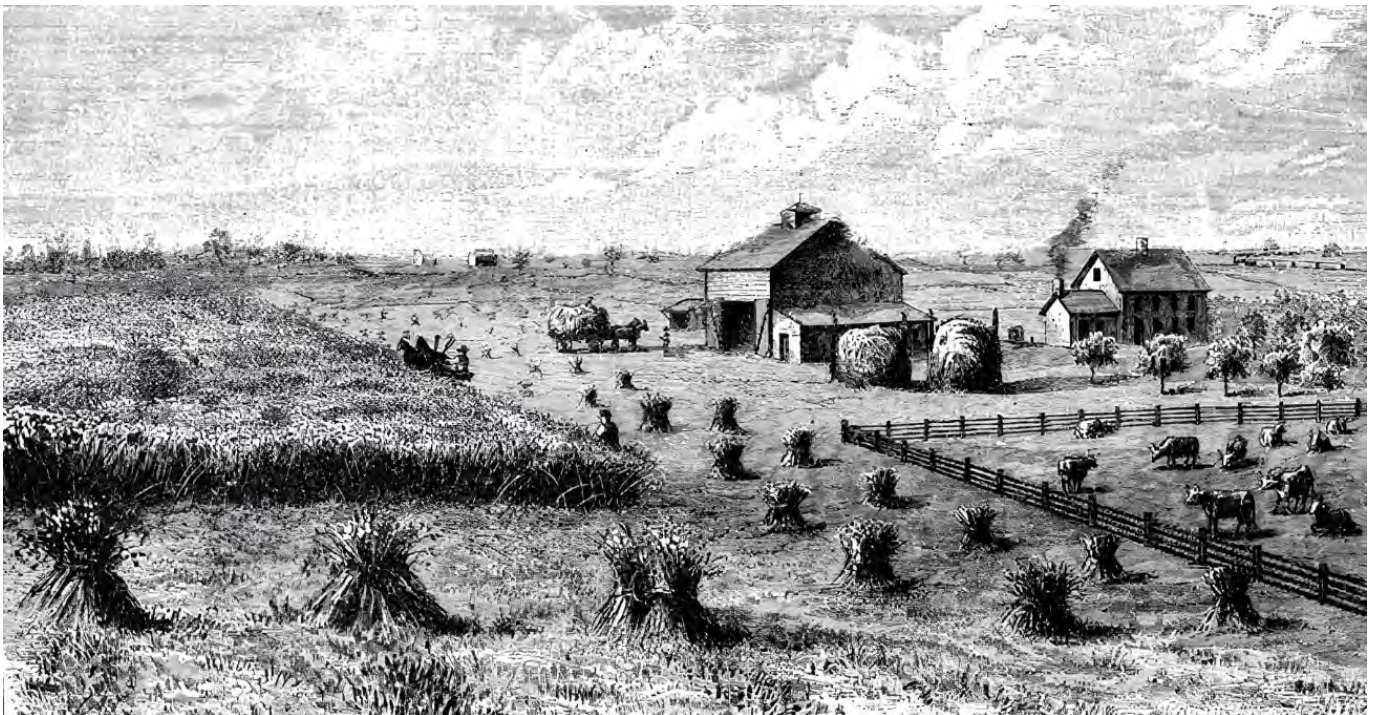


PATTERNS IN ROCK

Modern art? Not quite. This was the scene in the dried-out bottom of the St. Lawrence River after Long Sault Rapids had been drained to permit seaway and power

project construction. Rocks were worn smooth by swift flowing waters which were hazard to navigation from time white men arrived in North America.

That stretch of Highway 2 from Mille Roches to Cornwall was settled with small farms and tourist outlets.



On August 10, 1954, Prime Minister St. Laurent, Premier Leslie Frost and Governor Dewey of New York State gathered at Maple Grove to break ground and signal the start of the massive Seaway construction.

**Prime Minister,
Governor and Premier**

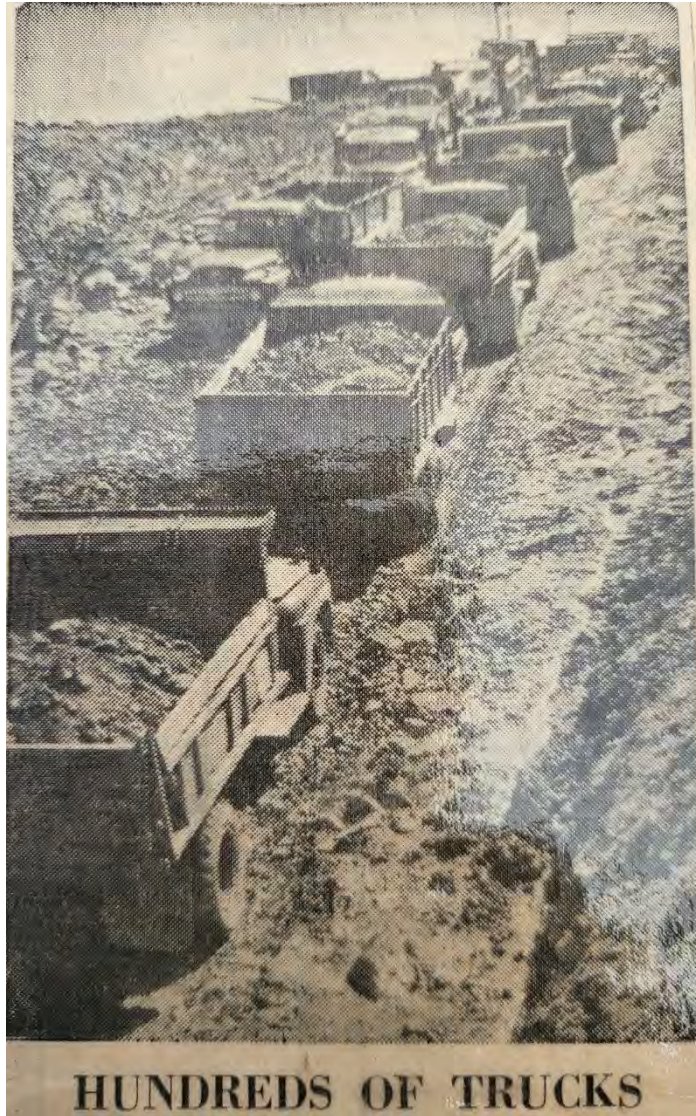


ABOVE: Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent (on the left), New York Governor Thomas Dewey and Ontario Premier Leslie Frost turn the first sod on August 10, 1954, just west of Cornwall, symbolically starting work on the St. Lawrence Seaway and Ontario Hydro Power Project. (CORNWALL COMMUNITY MUSEUM)

The scope of this construction project would be enormous for three huge dams had to be built across the St Lawrence River. The first two were built at Iroquois and Long Sault. The third was built just west of Cornwall.



Working alongside the huge earth-moving equipment were the crews working to remove thousands of trees and anything which might impede the flow of water once the Seaway was completed.



HUNDREDS OF TRUCKS

**Hundreds of trucks
moving stone and soil**

At Iroquois, 1,049 residents would be affected and 151 homes had to be moved to higher ground.

At Morrisburg, where 2,000 people were listed as residents, one third of the town was planned to be submerged under water and the entire area cleared.

Two new communities were to be built. One at Ingleside, which would accommodate those displaced from Iroquois, Farran's Point, Dickenson's Landing and Aultsville. A second community was built closer to Cornwall and was named Long Sault. It was built to accommodate those displaced from Wales, Moulinette, Mille Roches and Maple Grove.

The entire project was basically completed in August, 1958. 225 farms had disappeared under the water and 531 homes moved to higher ground. It had been a huge engineering success and it had all started for me when I attended the parade on Pitt Street in Cornwall, the night of June 7th, 1954.

However, all was not good for those living and remaining along the river, particularly those living downstream from Cornwall.

Our family was directly affected at our summer cottage at Stonehouse Point.

Downstream from the Powerhouse Dam, great stretches of the river became clogged with weeds. They flourished where the river flow was lessened by dredging for the ship channel right through to Lake St Francis (Lancaster).

Sport fishing and fish harvesting lessened. Swimming became less inviting as the shoreline became clogged with weeds and dead fish rotted in the entanglements. The river had been changed from a fast flowing, well-aerated waterway, to a sluggish, shallow-shored lake.

For many who were forced to move, it was demoralizing and traumatic but for others it was seen as a challenge.

But what was really hurtful to many was the seemingly heartless way that Ontario Hydro treated those most affected.

It was a memory of century-old homes been burnt to the ground, churches in which they had been married, or from which loved ones had been buried, were demolished. Mature trees and orchards disappeared at the swing of an axe, or the brutal action of a bulldozer.

These scenes were difficult to see and witness.

It was the violent end to a quiet way of life !!!

Last Look!



Credit: *Cornwall Daily Standard Freeholder*, Armstrong photos, and others taken from the internet.

Accompanying Ken Armstrong's article, I've included two other articles that complement what his family experienced.

Mille Roches

The Nineteenth Century

Mille Roches was probably the busiest of the lost villages and the closest community west of Cornwall. In its heyday it thrived as a small industrial centre with a population that peaked at around 1,200. The origin of its name, which, translated from French, means "*thousand rocks*", is a matter of some dispute. Some believe it referred to the rocky deposits along the shoreline whereas others believed it referred to the limestone quarry located directly north of the village. Certainly the limestone deposits were well known as far back as the early 1700s, when the Governor of New France sought permission from the King of France to extract the rocks.

By the mid 1830s, Mille Roches was showing definite signs of growth. The village was in the enviable position of having convenient access to a substantial amount of waterpower and within a short period of time, mills began popping up everywhere. Before long the village boasted an "*extensive*" grist mill, a marble factory and cutting mill, a carding mill and clothing works. A post office opened in August 1835.

However amidst all the bustle, optimism and prosperity, a dark cloud was looming on the horizon. Events were beginning to unfold that would cause the citizens of Mille Roches serious anguish and come close to annihilating their promising little community.

Construction of the Cornwall Canal began in 1834. The 11-mile long canal, which started at Cornwall and travelled westward through Mille Roches and Moulinette to Dickinson's Landing, would finally allow safe passage around the Long Sault Rapids.

However the canal intersected across the main road both north and south of the village virtually cutting it off from surrounding communities and making winter travel completely impossible.

To make matters worse, the construction crew at the quarry turned out to be much larger than originally planned and they were rapidly consuming all the wood, leaving very little fuel for Mille Roches' homes and businesses.

As business prospects dwindled and the fuel supply tightened, the villagers understandably became furious.

They started by pleading their case with the commissioners, demanding bridges and restitution for lost income and property values. They got nowhere. Finally, 35 villagers led by George Robertson, a respected mill owner, took their case to the legislature and secured a partial victory of sorts. The petitioners received restitution, but no bridges.

By the mid 1840s, Mille Roches was on a definite slide downwards as a result of the canal debacle. The situation was becoming so critical that Smith's 1846 *Canadian Gazetteer's* description of the community read "*it was once flourishing*".

Although its black limestone was still highly prized and the village continued to support several mills and a couple of stores, its future prospects looked pretty bleak. Gradually the community shifted northward and the cut-off piece became known as Old Mille Roches.

Things began to turn around after the railway arrived in the mid 1850s.

The railway threw Mille Roches a new lifeline and it didn't take long for the community to find itself back in business and growing rapidly.

The village boasted a wide range of services along with a large number of tradespeople and artisans including three cabinet makers, a couple of wheelwrights, two blacksmiths and a tannery.

Some like Louis Derousie, who was a shoemaker, blacksmith and innkeeper, wore several hats. Simon Ault owned both carding and fulling mills along with a cloth factory.

Other mill owners included George Robertson, who owned grist and oat mills and David Tait, who owned a sawmill. Israel Brooks, a cabinet maker, built the Brooks Furniture Company, highly regarded for its fine products. There were two butchers and three general stores, including a huge one run by American-born Whitcomb Kezar.

The Kezars also ran the post office from 1885 until 1923.

The Kezar home, with its wrap-around verandah and cupola on the roof, was among the finest in the area.

The Kezars were not content to sit tight with their large general store. By the late 1800s they were acting as agents for The G. F. Harvey Co., Manufacturing and Chemists, who manufactured pharmaceuticals, a large range of other medical products such as plasters, bandages and syringes, as well as with cheese factory supplies.

Kezar and Bennett later became known as Bennett & Messecar Co. Ltd. Other businesses included the Carpenter Brothers, General Merchants.

With businesses rapidly expanding and the difficulties of the Cornwall Canal far behind them, the citizens of Mille Roches were well prepared to take on the challenges of the twentieth century.



Mille Roches' peak period of prosperity took place from 1890 to 1910 when the William Davis construction firm was hired to enlarge the Cornwall Canal.

Reconstruction of the canal involved damming the river and enlarging the areas around Sheek's Island. This created a headpond {A natural or artificial pond or lake used for the storage and regulation of water. } that became known as Bergin Lake, named after Dr. Darcy Bergin, the local M.P.

A swing bridge that connected Mille Roches to Sheek Island was added. Michael Davis, William's son, built the dam. The enterprising Michael went on to form the St. Lawrence Power Company and construct a generating station that opened on October 24, 1901. The powerhouse contained four turbines and was able to generate up to 2.25 MW of power, enough to operate the lock and serve the village's needs until 1955.

Mille Roches had a public school and three churches, St. George's Roman Catholic Chapel, Mille Roches United Church and the Emmanuel Pentecostal Church. St. George's shared a priest with the churches at Dickinson's Landing and Farran's Point.

Although the closest Anglican Church was located in Moulinette, the church maintained a presence in Mille Roches in the form of a church hall. As with most early twentieth century villages, the churches were the community's most prominent buildings.

The railway station was located at the north end of town.

The village's main street, old Highway 2, was lined with businesses and the community was well regarded for its attractive homes.

The powerhouse lasted until 1955, when it was demolished to make way for the Seaway construction. The post office finally closed in January 1958.

Of all the villages, Mille Roches lies deepest in the water - 40 feet below the surface. Its outline can still be seen under the right lighting conditions. The location has become a popular spot for divers, who have found the old turbines and other sections of the powerhouse and locks.

Two brick homes, once belonging to Ezra Johnston and Hugh Warner, were moved to Long Sault. The Lapierre store was salvaged and restored and can now be found in Ault Park at the Lost Villages Historical Society.

Source: www.ghosttownpix.com/lostvillages/millroch2.html



Another article, also taken from the web:

Sheek's Island

Sheek Island is an island in the St. Lawrence River. It is considered to be one of Ontario's Lost Villages, which were permanently flooded by the creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1958.

While much of the island has been flooded, a portion of it remains above water, but is not populated.

Sheek Island was occupied primarily by family farms and recreational properties.

In 1914, Levi Addison Ault donated a family property on the island to the Township of Cornwall, which became Ault Park.

After the island was flooded by the Seaway project, Ault Park was rebuilt on the new shoreline near Long Sault.

From 1956 to 1958, archaeologists conducted excavations in Ault Park, and believed that they may have found remnants of a 3,500-year old native village.

The University of Toronto petitioned for an injunction against the Seaway project so that the excavations could continue, but were not successful. A number of artifacts were taken from the site for further study.

This page was last edited on 14 October 2024.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheek%27s_Island

Alluvial Rocks of Sheek Island



What once was above water, lies underneath.

In 1958, half of Sheek Island was inundated by the creation of the headpond for the power dam at Cornwall, Ontario. The mighty Long Sault rapids of the St. Lawrence river were stilled and lay submerged below what is now known as Lake St. Lawrence. The rocks visible here were once field stones.

After fifty years the water has removed all the top soil leaving a rock garden of now alluvial stone.

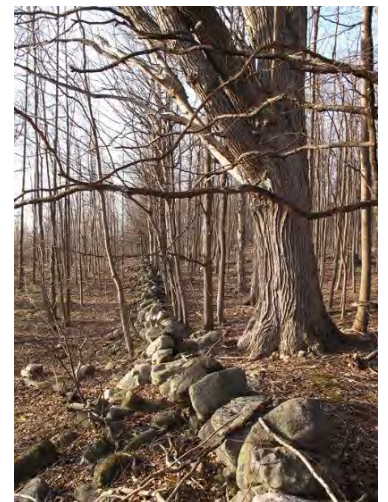
Ghost Island



The sandy beach of Sheek's Island on Lake St. Lawrence, Ontario. Somewhere under these waters lay the remains of a 3,500 year old native American village.



We came across this fine, rather large, Shagbark Hickory tree near an old stone fence on Sheek Island. It's at least 100 years old and surrounded by an emerging young deciduous forest reclaiming the pastures of this ghost island. Hickory trees are rare, having been harvested for their extremely dense wood.



Attention all UEL Descendants and friends

Kawartha Branch is planning
a tour of the Peterborough Armouries
on Tuesday, January 22, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.



Hoping that you
will be able
to join !!!



In February, we are planning to host
a Valentine's Celebration at Kelsey's Road House,
1211 Lansdowne Street West, Peterborough.
Stay tuned for those dates !!!



As well, Joan Lucas UE
will be our guest speaker
on Sunday, February 16, via ZOOM,
where she will be talking about
John Ernest Dafoe UEL,
one of her Loyalist ancestors !!!



Sincerely and loyally yours,

Bob McBride



Bob McBride UE, Kawartha Branch Publications & Publicity Chair.