

Despite the challenges that this legislation presented to all native Canadians, the community at Alderville continued to pass on their traditions. In 1914, Alderville finally gained access to the waterfront of Rice Lake, allowing the community to practice traditional rice gathering, fishing, and hunting. During the First World War, 35 men from Alderville served overseas, and 9 did not return. In 1927 a cenotaph was erected to commemorate their service. Later, those who served in World War II, Korea and other conflicts were added.

In 1937 Alderville celebrated its 100th anniversary with two services and a pageant. It was during that decade, however, that the rice began to disappear from the lake. Members of Alderville continued to harvest, but they had to travel to other lakes. It was not until the 1970s that the rich history and important traditions of the people of Alderville were widely recognized by the surrounding community. Roseneath Centennial School established a Native Enrichment Programme, and a Royal Ontario Museum dig began to excavate Sugar Island with the help of local students. As Ruth Clarke describes in her book it became “a turning point for their pride in being Indian”.

These slow cultural shifts would be followed by a major legislative one in 1985 with further changes to the Indian Act. With Bill C-31, women would be treated equal to men, allowing for women who married non-native men to regain status. Many women who had been born and raised at Alderville were finally allowed to return home. In the late 1980s, Ojibway became a subject at Roseneath Centennial School.



Harvesting wild rice on rice lake - c1921



Alderville First Nation Cenotaph

