

OTTAWA VALLEY DAYS—

Veteran of Upper Ottawa Trails Tells of Old Stopping Places

Joseph Farrell, 95 Year Survivor of Old Guard of Rivermen,
Distinguishes Between Inns and "Bottle-in-the-Window"
Places—Route From Bytown to Pembroke Studded
With Popular Taverns.

Written for The Journal
by Harry J. Walker.

WHEN the last of the fur brigades negotiated the Cheneaux (Snow) Rapids, he saw the swarthy crews fed on corn and grease and sea biscuit outside his father's inn near Bonnechere Point while the boss trader swigged proof stuff at the bar.

When Johnny McMullen ("Derry Walls-and-no-Surrender") was in his prime, he saw him flash a "hitch-kick" that registered heel-marks on the ceiling of that same bar.

When the iron-clad "Oregon" was the pride of the Chats, he saw this famous river steamer conquer the Cheneaux, defying hell and high water.

And so as we looked into the dimming eyes of Joseph Farrell, 95 year veteran of a vanishing Old Guard of Valley rivermen, we thought of the many changes he had witnessed in nearly one hundred years of life; of the swift march of time that has changed the design of living from a wilderness pattern of oxen and bush trails to a complicated mosaic of stream-lined utility.

Bottle-in-the-Window.

ACCOMPANIED by his sons, William and Wallace Farrell, of Renfrew, we had driven out the old road to Bonnechere Point to interview this near-last survivor of a great age concerning the location of the old inns and "stopping places" along the Upper Ottawa route and inland. An article some years ago by Mr. H. R. Morgan, historian of Brockville, had given us a basis of research, and so we came to the hospitable hearth of Mr. Joseph Farrell in quest of further data.

His father had kept a well-known tavern in pioneer days at Bonnechere Point, and so, with pardonable pride, he informed us that in those days there were regular "stopping places" and "other places with just a bottle-in-the-window." This was an eye-opener to us so we told him we wanted to hear about both.

Elucidating further, he explained that "bottle-in-the-window" places had no accommodation for the traveller, not even for a meal. These were just one-cuppers on the trail where a thirst for hard stuff

to March and thence to Carp and Galetta for a distance of 42 miles. This route was studded with taverns some of which were: Woods' five miles from Bytown; one-armed Bell's, two miles farther on (now Bell's Corners); Boucher's, another four miles distant; Armstrong's at March; Munroe's near the Carp; and Lowry's.

On the Quebec Side.

THE OTHER route, over the ice, skirted Lake Deschenes, keeping close to the north shore to the first stopping place of Roger Moore's, nine miles above Aylmer, near Breckenridge. Then past Rocky point over a short land stretch to the celebrated log inn of Joe Voilan's. Here Joe played the fiddle for purchased rounds of drinks at his bar and invited privileged guests into his "parlor."

At Quyon Landing was the stopping place of John McCabe, two miles from the old Hudson Bay post under the grizzled factor, J. J. MacTavish. After traversing a difficult portage here, the ice road crossed to the Upper Canada side to reach the settlements of Arnprior and Sand Point.

Old Wagon Road.

BETWEEN Arnprior and the Cheneaux (more often called the Snow) the traveller again had the choice of a land or ice road. The first land road in this area was opened by William Morris, of Perth, who obtained a Government grant for the purpose of cutting a wagon trail to Meramichi (now Pembroke). But for many years it only went as far as the foot of the Snow rapids.

Between Arnprior and Sand Point there were quite a number of clearances, notably those of Patrick McGonigal, Chief McNab (Kinnell Lodge), Duncan McNab, Malcolm McLaren, James O'Connor, Patrick Callaghan and James Robertson and his two sons.

At Sand Point, Alexander Macdonell had his headquarters, and there was also a hotel run by William Craig. Above Sand Point, the next stopping place was that of Michael Roddy, whose farm on Norway Point was named after the stand of mighty Norway pines that once grew there. The next place to note was at Charlotte Creek where Captain Christopher

taverns on the river. Edward Farrell had emigrated from Stonehall, County Sligo, Ireland, and soon established himself on the river fringe of the forest. On the site of this famous wilderness hostelry is now the red-brick residence of William Johnstone. Edward Farrell was one of the first to try to tap the timber resources of the Bonnechere hinterland, and to this end, he cut inland nearly three miles of bush road. This old road continued as far as Renfrew, passing by John Brimer's (we think that should be Bremner's) and William Richardson's. Then it crossed the Bonnechere at the Gibbons' farm, and entered Renfrew via Hall street. It left the town by Carswell's Hill and thence to

Inland Route.

ACCORDING to Mr. Joseph Farrell's story to this writer, there were three of these "bottle-in-the-window" places along this inland route to Renfrew. One of them was kept by an old lady, named Clark, on the 9th concession of Horton; another was owned by Alexander Smith, while the third was the stand of a man named Kennedy at Jamieson's Corner.

In reminiscent mood, Joseph Farrell visualized for us those colorful years when life was raw and rough. He had intimate knowledge of the river traffic with its turbulent days of gang fights. In his list of river champions he gave a high rating to the MacFarlanes of Clarendon, and to Alex Smith, whom he declared once took the measure of the great Joe Montferrand at the Snake Creek bridge. Vividly he described that fight and informed us that "you might as well get a kick from a horse as a wallop from Alex Smith." He told us of the fury of the Cheneaux Rapids in spate, and how the "Alliance," built at Sand Point, would bring her cargo to the foot of the rapids where it would be transferred to the lighter "Snow-Bird" for passage to Portage du Fort.

German Settlers.

HE told us, too, of the trek of German settlers inland to the old Conroy limit to what was then