2020 Renfrew South District Women's Institute 90th Anniversary Quilt Tour
Nichols Bus 4, Mitchell Township, ON
[illegible]

At the end of Hwy 514 we turn left onto 515 and follow the Madawaska River to anf through Palmer Rapids crossing it twice before we come to Combermere and lunch stop. If we turned right here we could go to Wal Gem Lapidary.

Palmer Rapids has an Ont. Hydro Dam to control the water levels on the Madawaska (no powerhouse). Also blue grass festival is now in progress.

Jewelville - a Ministry of Natural Resources Headquarters. Note in Combermere we will be crossing the Madawaska on a curved, elevated bridge. There are only 2 of these in Ontario, they say, where is the other?

You are all familiar with the name Bernice Noblitt. Some have entered B.N. Competitions. She was once Secr. and later Pres. of Combermere, eventually Pres. of FWIO and also of FWIC. She and her husband came from Saskatchewan in 1940's as he became a partner in Craigmont Corrundum mine which one could reach by going out past Madonna House.

We are to meet our Combermere members at Madonna House at 12:00. When we arrive please stay on the bus until we find out whether we will be lunching on the gounds here or further down the road at Stevenson's Lodge.

Kathleen O'Hanson of Combermere W.I. is arranging our tour of Madonna House. She is on the board. Our time there will be from 1:00 to 3:00. Everyone back on the bus by 3:00. Winters are cold in Combermere too!

5 km from Combermere on the old Barry's Bay road ia the picturesque Crooked Slide Park. Lack of funding has caused this park to be less groomed than it once was but it is a scenic spot for picture-taking. The area features a replica of the log slides used in pioneer days to transport logs safely over rough water. Massive squared timber & logs from the Algonquin Highlands were floated down the rivers & lakes of Renfrew Co.

This road is called the Kaszuby Road. Kaszuby is ½ way between Combermere and Wilno & is a polish settlement named for the area in Poland whence the settlers came. Kaszuby is also home of the famous Polish Boy Scout camp. And they also have a natural open-air church. We will hear more about Kaszuby when we reach Wilno on our way home.

Kaszuby is also ½ way between Palmer Rapids & Barry's Bay & was a stopping point for rest and food when teams went from one to the other. When a post office was established there it was only logical to call it "Halfway P.O.". Halfway is home of our own Amelia Yantha Pres. of Goshen Branch, and that 1st P. O. was run by her mother, Mrs. Smaglinski.

Hudson House - stop in front. Built in 1912. Two predecessors (hotels by same name) were burnt.

The Mayflower was a sternwheeler steamboat that plied Lake Kaminiskeg, which is an expansion of the Madawaska river. People travelled via it from Barry's Bay to Combermere. The captain was John Hudson (also owner) & they picked up passengers in front of the hotel. Capt. John's mother ran the hotel.

The hotel operated until 1955 & was then used as a private residence. Then the front became a store in the 1960's and remained so for 6 years. Vacant since then until it was bought in 1983, restored and opened for business in 1986. "Mecca" is owner and operator.

Sinking of the Mayflower was one of S. Renfrew's greatest tradgedies. It occurred on Nov. 12, 1912. Although we cannot see the wreck from here it is still in the lake and each summer divers spend time exploring its remains.

The sinking of the Mayflower:

On the cold and stormy night of Nov. 12, 1912, the Mayflower was en route from Barry's Bay to Combermere with 11 passengers, some freight, and a corpse in a coffin.

The regular sailing season had just closed but young John Brown, who had been the victim of a farm accident in Saskatchewan was being sent home to Palmer Rapids for burial so Capt. John Hudson agreed to make the journey to transport the casket.

About 3 miles from Barry's Bay, as the boat was entering the Madawaska the Mayflower sank suddenly. The only survivors were 3 men who clung to the coffin and floated to an island. The boat was never refloated and the cause of the tragedy never determined.

The body in the coffin was that of a brother of Mae Craigs grandfath and one of the survivors was a relative of the dead man.

Dinner - St. James Anglican Church Hall at 4 P.M. Stay aboard until we are sure they are ready for us. Then find a seat and wait for our Institute Grace. Sing - "This Land".