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Sub 4

PIONEER SETTLEMENT

The Frenchmen who controlled Canada throughout the 17th century and the first half of the 18th, explored Wabab-lak, but never came to know it intimately. A map drawn up as late as 1760 grossly distorts White Lake by showing 5 separate lakes.

Champlain's excursions up the Ottawa River did not encourage settlement of the land on the side of the river opposite Quebec. The French-Canadians tended to remain content with the wilderness they had already tamed in New France.

Who knows how many adventurous courier-de-bois ventured into the area around White Lake? Exploitation was the policy pursued by both the French explorer and the Hudson's Bay Company--the mercantilist economies of these European nations demanded raw materials from the colonies.

Wabab-lak was avoided by everyone who wanted to settle in Canada till the 1820's. The great Loyalist migration from the American Republic had no effect on the community. There was no real attempt to settle White Lake till the early 1800's--but when the village's time came, it came with a bang.

CHIEF ARCHIBALD MC NAB, last laird of McNab a Scottish chieftain who clung to the feudal system which was once dominant in the Old World, gave White Lake its early reputation. Leaving his creditors behind in Scotland, McNab made his way to Canada where he gained possession of 81,000 acres of land adjoining the Ottawa River. The "Family Compact" granted him the new township and allowed him to name it what he wished; predictably, the land became "McNab Township".

In 1825, the first group of settlers arrived at what is now Arnprior where the Chief allotted their land to them and laid down his feudal laws.

White Lakes' first settlers--the McNabs--the Camerons--the Campbells, the McKays--the McNeVins--came at their own expense from Scotland in 1830. They settled in the hard wood country around White Lake in order to make profit out of potash. Potash was the only going concern in the area till lumbering developed.

*These settlers came from the Campbell District.*  
These settlers agreed to pay McNab, his heirs or successors three barrels of flour or Indian corn, or oats of like value "Forever"

Meanwhile Chief McNab was setting up a home at White Lake on a piece of land granted to his son Allan by the Government. This home stood at the North End of White Lake overlooking the Lake.

"Waba Cottage" a baronial stone edifice was erected in 1835. This residence was only a symbol of the proud, autocratic chieftain, who attempted to run his township like a medi-evil fiefdom.

When McNab began to expropriate too much money for his own purposes, the settlers rose in rebellion.

The chief left the Township never to return in 1883. *He died unknown and unseen in a fishing village in France.*

*→ In 1934, a large party of Stewarts, McLaughlins, Robertsons, Fergusons and Shuffe arrived from Blair, Athol, Scotland.*