



COMBERMERE IN THE OLDEN DAYS

Combermere, a scattered community of about 250 population, lies where Highway 62 crosses approximately the middle of a 38 mile stretch of navigable waterway on the Madawaska River, 925 foot elevation and free from hay fever.

It has served the lumber industry in by-gone days, under the name of Dennison's Bridge, when the square timber rafts were floated down from Algonquin Park to their destination in Ottawa, Quebec and across the seas to England. There are still signs of the old log drivers Chute where the timber was floated around the rapids on Byers Creek.

For that time it was a busy settlement with a tannery, woollen mill, grist mill, cheese factory, blacksmith and shoe shop, and two hotels which served the river drivers.

In 1871 a small log school house was built on land purchased from Mr. Dennison for one dollar. The first teacher was the doctor's wife, and she received one hundred and fifty dollars a year. The school was used for a church, and the doctor did the preaching. To-day there is a modern public school as well as a separate elementary and high school.

In 1880 the name of the settlement was changed to Combermere. About 1883 the Schweigs, and the Boehmes arrived from Germany and the Farmers from Wales. These latter, opened a small shop where they made river drivers' boots. The Reids opened a woollen mill which has long since been torn down. Mr. James McKay built a grist mill

and it has long since been demolished, as well as the shingle mill, once operated by Mr. David Adrain. Mr. Paddy O'Brien arrived from Rockingham and opened the O'BRIEN HOUSE.

The beauties of Combermere and the good fishing became known to the outside world, tourists flocked in and fishing camps and tourist resorts sprang up. Among the early ones were Mrs. M.J. Hudson's (Widow of Captain Hudson, lost on the "Mayflower"), F. Conley's and Mrs. Boehme's. Through the years the tourist trade has grown and many more lodges cater to the summer population.

To-day there is a newly built road between Combermere and Barry's Bay, and a new bridge crosses the Madawaska River just below the site of the old one. It is truly a beautiful village and there is no more wonderful sight than the Autumn leaves reflected in the peaceful waters of the river.

Artists have found it and it has become the "Paradise for Painters."