

In 1920 the Uren Prehistoric Village was uncovered on lot 8, con. 7, of S. Norwich township and from this find and exploration of neighbouring farms, knowledge of the Neutral Indians who lived centuries ago, was gained.

These Neutral Indians were wiped out in 1652 by the Iroquois, who were the inhabitants of the white pine forests of Norwich township at the time of the European settlement at the turn of the 19th century. What a contrast can be visualized when one thinks of the settlers travelling through the forests along blazed trails travelled by Indians and wild animals, instead of modern highways.

Speaking of roads, I notice that the stage fare from Norwich to Burford in 1851 was 2 shillings and 6 pence

Some things of interest about the village of Norwich are found in the Centenary Souvenir Book of Norwich published in 1910. In this book it states that in 1809 Peter Lossing came from Dutchess County, N.Y. to look for a suitable home for himself and family and being informed that there were desirable lands in Oxford County he visited them and found that they suited him. He purchased 15000 acres of land for 50c an acre. I am told the original deed is still in the Lossing family.

In a letter addressed to the Editor of the Review (presumed to be the Woodstock Review) a writer named Milton Cameron, about the year 1878, reviewed his "Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in S. Norwich." Some portions of this letter are worth repeating. He states the first house was built in Otterville 1808 and the builder finding a suitable mill site on the Otter, built the first mill ever to adorn the banks of the Otter creek—thus the name Otter Creek Mills and then Otterville.

The first white child ever born in S. Norwich was born in 1809 and her name was Sarah Gilbert. The first marriage was in 1813 when Miss Erennis Cook of Otter Creek Mills was united in marriage to Mr. Gilbert Harris of West Oxford. The first death was a lad, aged 16, Royal Sweet, son of Robert Sweet—cause of death was white swelling on the knee. Pioneer school house was built in 1812, first store 1816 at Otterville, the same year a famine occurred and the settlers were obliged to live for 4 weeks on green wheat boiled in milk. The first post office was built in 1830 being the 3rd in the county. Ingersoll claimed to be the first in 1821 and Norwich village just earlier than Otterville in the same year. The first licensed tavern, in Otterville, was built of logs in 1830. One could go on and on in history with firsts in our county and all are of interest to someone, but when we are aware of how rapid the change in our area has been, then we know planning for the future is of the utmost importance, not just planning for construction how and where, but planning how we are going to maintain our natural resources.

Apparently our governments realized something must be done, so by an Act of Parliament in 1946 it became possible for Conservation Authorities to be established.

The first step in establishing a Conservation Authority is undertaken by all the municipalities wholly or partially within a watershed. Two such municipalities must first by resolution petition the Government to call a meeting for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not an Authority should be established. Two-thirds of the number of representatives which the municipalities are entitled to appoint (on a population basis) must be present to make the meeting legal. It two-thirds of those present vote in favor of establishing an Authority a resolution is forwarded to the Government. The Authority is then established by Order-In-Council, including representatives from all municipalities in the watershed.

As a boy the word conservation meant only one thing to me, the protection of our forests. Probably to many others it meant the same, but as time passes we soon learn the broader meaning of the word conservation—wildlife management, protection of source areas of rivers and streams, re-forestation,

woodlot management, flood and pollution control, improved land use and provision for recreation facilities

Since Authorities are not equipped to carry out extensive investigations where conservation work should be done, the Conservation Branch of the Department, now Lands and Forests, carries out preliminary investigations as a service to the Authorities, to appraise by means of surveys and reports, the conservation needs of each watershed, and to submit to the Authorities a detailed report outlining the conservation measures that should be implemented.

The survey work is grouped under five general headings, namely History, Land Use, Forestry, Water, Wildlife and in some instances, Recreation. From these reports we try to practise conservation in our own watersheds.

I would like to make mention of some of the work that has been accomplished in the B.C.R. C.A. and I will comment only on what has been done since we were assigned a Field Officer in 1955. We have purchased 2118 acres of forests at a cost of \$131,495.00; of this amount \$59,125 was a timber grant from the Department in respect to merchantable timber. We have assisted in planting 84,400 trees on private lands. Provided subsidy assistance for 33 irrigation structures. We have provided engineering service and 25% subsidy to landowners wishing to build dams to store runoff water for irrigation or livestock watering. Seven landowners have taken advantage of this. We sponsored the construction of a plastic lined pond at the Dominion Experimental farm at Delhi; Assisted a private landowner on channel improvement; sponsored a gully control project; sponsored an experimental installation of 3—150' gabion groynes in Houghton township; sponsored 3 land ludging competitions. We have had our Authority foremen build and erect wood duck nests and assist the O.A.C. in the evaluation of the results of this project. We cleaned the Backus pond of carp and planted wild rice for ducks—also stocked the pond with bass and perch to promote family fishing at this popular picnic place. We have planted shrubs to provide food for wildlife at Backus and Waterford Conservation Areas and at Waterford we will stock one of the spring-fed ponds with rainbows next spring.

To promote our Public Relations the Authority has conducted a broad program to reach as wide a segment of the people as possible. Various media have been used including press and radio releases, elementary scrapbook competitions, fair displays, educational literature, demonstrations of conservation practices, nature trails and public speaking engagements. We conduct a bus tour every second year to keep members in touch with our activities. We have several conservation areas where we demonstrate various conservation practices and philosophies and provide public recreation facilities. We have nine of these areas and the public makes good use of several. Our biggest, at Waterford, is 250 acres. Three lakes cover approximately 100 acres. This area provides a concession, boating, fishing, picnic tables, well water, barbeques, parking lot, toilet facilities, swimming and change houses. This area is self sustaining from a parking fee and it is estimated that 90,000 people made use of this area last year.

This gives some idea of our work, but we have scarcely started and I say this because how tragic it is that Progress and Destruction go hand in hand. Price rules supreme and some of our best arable land has been taken out of agricultural production as if there were an endless supply. Mining and industrial waste, as well as domestic sewage, have all contributed to the pollution of lakes and streams. Smelters with their noxious fumes have wrought havoc on trees and vegetation. Fish and wildlife have disappeared. Water supplies have been endangered. The beauty of our natural environment has been obliterated and its use denied.

Highways, hydro lines, oil and gas lines are built upon the premise of the shortest distance

between two points. Our multi-lane highways and hydro lines appear to regard valuable trees as incidental.

In total, irresponsible haste has produced a frightening waste of wealth and effort and of basic natural resources. Ultimately, humanity is the loser of the true values.

Conservation is everyone's business. The earth has been

given to us in Trust to develop and replenish, not to deplete or destroy.