

75 Years Later

Seventy-five years ago on a cold January day a baby boy was born in a little frame house on what is now known as Lake Helen Mission. At that time it was just a piece of land on which sat a few assorted dwellings. The baby was baptized in St. Sylvester's Church at Lake Helen and was named John Ray. Three-quarters of a century later John Ray Sr. still resides in Nipigon, at least he winters in Nipigon. He spends his summers in Gurney just as he has done for the last 54 years.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since 1910, and if we listen carefully to our senior resident's life John Ray, we can appreciate our town as it is now.

When John was just a lad growing up in the area, Lake Helen Reserve did not exist. Nipigon was just a few houses scattered around Red Rock House down by the dock and had about 200 residents. Most of the rest of the town as we now know it was just bush.

There was not a lot of time for schooling in those days; young John had to go to work at age 13 cutting pulpwood to help support his family. When he was fourteen years old he went to work in the bush as a lumberjack, a job that, except for a few diversions, he performed until he retired after the last river drive in 1972.

Several of these diversions occurred when he was just a young man. At times he had to take work where he could find it. One such occasion was when he hired on with general merchant William McKirdy, after whom McKirdy Avenue was named. John's job was to make deliveries

with McKirdy's horse and cart. When not busy doing this he had to pull nails out of all the old shipping boxes and split them up for sale as kindling.

When I asked John if he remembered any exciting events that occurred in Nipigon, he recalled the time when McKirdy got the first truck ever to come to Nipigon. It was a brown moden T flatback and it was delivered by train. When the train arrived the whole town turned out to see the new truck being unloaded. During the summer months John taught himself to drive the thing, but when the winter arrived it was back to the horses, as the truck would not run in cold weather.

The truck was not the first vehicle however, to arrive in Nipigon. That honour belonged to a black 1920 Ford Convertible owned by John Salo. Mr. Salo was so thrilled by his new acquisition that he gave every man, woman and child on both sides of the river a ride in his new automobile.

Roads to drive on were limited, and those that were available were made of gravel. The road ended at the Nipigon River and any vehicle wishing to cross had to do so by means of Dampier's Ferryboat. Those pedestrians who wished to make the crossing had to do so by canoe or by running the gauntlet with the trains on the C.P. bridge. It was alright on a still day, you could hear the trains coming, said John, but on a windy day it was a bit risky. Several times John was forced to take a hasty refuge on a platform halfway across the bridge, it was just a matter of holding on and praying

The problem was taken care of in the early 1940s when the Trans-Canada Highway construction came through town and built a bridge across the Nipigon River. John was employed on that job, he worked 10 hours a day and was paid \$5 per month.

Around the same time that the highway was going through town, there was great excitement when the Prince of Wales, who was soon to become King Edward, arrived for a fishing holiday on the Nipigon River. John's father was one of the guides hired for the Royal trip.

Young John continued to pursue his career in the bush. He married his wife Sophie in 1930, the ceremony being performed in St. Sylvester's Church, the same Church in which he was baptized 20 years earlier. He continued to supplement his earnings by trapping and selling the furs to the Hudson's Bay Co., which at that time was located down by the dock.

In 1939 John and Sophie moved to Gurney to live and in 1962 they built a new home there.

John and Sophie raised a family of 8 sons and 5 daughters, most of whom still live in the Nipigon area. One of them told me that John is famous for his pancakes. We try to be around Sunday morning, she said, that's when dad whips up a fresh batch. He also has a recipe for pickling whitefish, they turn out just like salmon and even taste like salmon.

Since John retired in 1972 he and Sophie have taken things pretty easy and have been enjoying the relaxation of retirement, although when I arrived he was shovelling snow from his driveway.



John and Sophie Ray relax at home.

Seventy five years is a long time to live in one area, but as one looks around at the changes that have taken place in that time, it must be gratifying to realize that even though we sometimes fail, pro-

gress has passed us by, we have the experience of people like John Ray Sr., to reflect on, and this convinces us that we are indeed moving ahead with the times.

Beardmore News

By Jackie Boughner

Recently a meeting of "Renew" was held in Terrace Bay, and groups of groups and lay people participated in the Renew experience. Local groups in attendance were: Beardmore - Mrs. Pearl Ladouceur, Mrs. Marion Wenzoski, Mrs. Lorraine Riordon, Sisten Kathleen, Sister Jean and Father Bill Maurice. From MacDiarmid - Mrs. Valda L'Esperance and Mr. and Mrs. Simon Nakanakis. From Jellicoe was Mrs. Docile Brideau. Also participating were groups from Red Rock, Schreiber, Marathon, Heron Bay, Thunder Bay and Terrace Bay.

Sister Frances Ordway, a Loetta Sister from Milton, Ontario instructed participants in the development and meaning of the Renew process.

As the name suggests, "Renew" is an invitation to the entire parish and community to participate together in a fuller, more joyful practice of faith and community activities. Renew was started by lay people in an American

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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT TENDER

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS TENDER NO. 60-84-78

Contractors are invited to submit a bid price for the following:

- 2.93 Hectares Clearing Hwy. 587
- and 8.54 Hectares Close Cut Clearing Hwy. 587

Sealed Tenders, on forms supplied by the Ministry, will be received by the Manager, Administrative Services until 1:30 p.m. local time.

Wednesday, February 20, 1985

Specifications, tender forms and envelopes may be obtained in person or by mail from E.G. Reguly, Head, Purchasing and Supply, Walsh at Mountdale Avenue, P.O. Box 1177, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7C 4X9, Telephone 807-577-6451 Ext. 292.

Please specify Tender No. 60-84-78 when requesting Tenders.

THE LOWEST OR ANY TENDER NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPTED.



Ministry of Transportation and Communications

Nipigon District Memorial Hospital Building Fund DONATIONS

Towards New Hospital Complex

- St. Hilary's School, Gr. 3 & 4, Red Rock **500.00**
- 34.67**
- William T. Baker, Nipigon **150.00**
- Robert & Martha Ham **20.00**
- Township of Nipigon, per capita - Grant **2,500.00**
- Domtar Forest Products Charity Fund **530.00**

In Memory of Late Vera Whent

- Hilton Whent **1,000.00**
- Ladies Aux. Nipigon Volunteer Fire Brigade **10.00**

In Memory of Late Edwin Rajala:

- Hilton Whent **25.00**

In Memory of Late Victor Rajala:

- Hilton Whent **25.00**
- Gerald Landry **20.00**

In Memory of Late Carl Atkinson:

- Alan LeBar (Grandson) **300.00**

In Memory of Late James Young:

- Wayne Young **20.00**

In Memory of Late Mr. N. Rivic:

- C. Grogan, Nipigon **25.00**

In Memory of Late Joy Lynn Imhoff:

- Don & Kit Ruoho **20.00**
- Ted & Gwen Nyman & family **20.00**
- Stores & Purchasing Staff, Domtar Packaging **65.00**
- Office Staff, Domtar Packing **51.00**

In Memory of Jean Parker's Brother (Scotland)

- Nipigon Hospital Staff **15.00**

In Memory of Late Lorraine Bingleman:

- Dalton & Shirley Johnston **20.00**

In Memory of Late Brian Booker:

- Nipigon Hospital Staff **15.00**
- Dalton & Shirley Johnston **10.00**
- Murray, Donnie, Patty, Amber & Laurie Tomes, R.R. **25.00**
- Staff Greenmantle School, Nipigon **25.00**

In Memory of Late Wilbur Jackson

- Taisto Halme **50.00**

RED ROCK

Ladies Curling Bonspiel

Feb. 15, 16 & 17

Entry Fee \$90.00

(Will accept the first 32 paid rinks)

Entry Deadline Feb. 10th Banquet

Dance (open to public)

3 events/send entries to:

Mrs. Marie Malley
Box 472
Red Rock, Ontario
886-2834.



Prizes for Costumes