

# FOCUS ON LONG POINT

## THE HISTORY OF LONG POINT

by Art Shaw

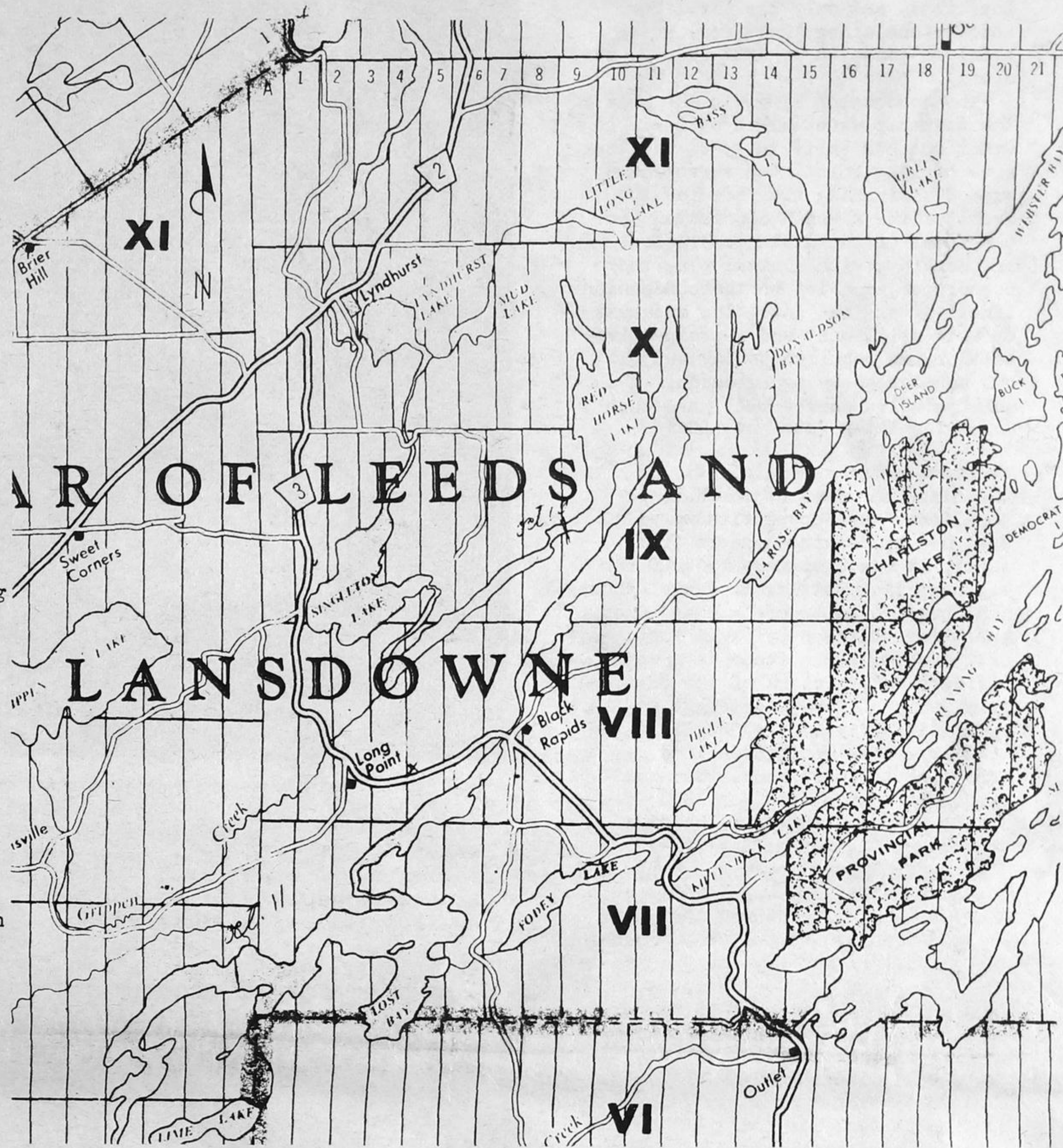
### PART I

This is the first chapter in the history of Long Point. It is not the history of a village, but the history of an area whose people feel a sense of community. For me to say that I come from Long Point is like saying that I come from Pavement Narrows or Deer Crossing. A stranger can stand beside the sign and ask "Where is it?", but a native knows that the sign is standing on a downtown corner.

The name comes from the rocky peninsula which causes the south bound waters of the Gananoque River to detour in a north-easterly direction for three miles to the Cap, opposite Red Horse Rock, before continuing south through Black Rapids on its way to the St. Lawrence.

For the purpose of this history, we will consider the boundaries to include lots A to 10 in the eighth concession of Lansdowne Twp., plus the north half of lots A to 8 in the seventh and the south half of lots 4 to 14 in the ninth. These boundaries are not definite because of the way the lakes and rivers dissect the territory and isolate parts of lots from each other. Such an isolation by geographical obstruction and road pattern is the reason that a sense of community arose, along with the fact that for 130 years, roughly 1830 to 1960, the people were tied together by a common occupation: - farming.

A thousand years before Europeans began the exploration of N. America, Leeds County was the domain of primitive hunters. Extensive evidence of their occupation has been brought to light on Tidd's Island in the St. Lawrence at Gananoque and at Roebuck in Augusta Twp. Important discoveries have also been made on Wolfe Island and in Pittsburg Twp., which yielded many items of copper, as did the Tidd's Island site. Several overhanging rock formations within Charleston Lake Provincial Park are documented sites of Indian habitation and rocks along the water there bear the faint remains of Indian pictographs. Chance discoveries of individual artifacts recur throughout the area, and Long Point has yielded its share, as shown in the three photos. The items shown in Photo 1 were found at Rice's Narrows in 1945 by Clark Tye when he was digging footings for some of the cabins there. Besides the items shown, there was a finely carved stone pipe which has been lost again since. The items shown in Photo 2 were unearthed over the course of many years plowing by Elmer J. Bryan within a very small area on Long Point itself. The pottery bowl shown in Photo 3 was retrieved by archeologists from the depths of Charleston Lake at the eastern terminus of the old portage from Red Horse Lake. It will be returned to the Park from Ottawa this spring, along with others from the same site, to be displayed for the summer.



The extent to which the French travelled the Gananoque River is not recorded. It is likely that they were familiar with Long Point and Black Rapids from their inland wanderings between 1673 and 1760. The former date is the year that Count Frontenac founded his trading post at Cataragui, just 35 miles to the west, and the latter date the year of General Amherst's victory over the French at Fort de Levis, 50 miles to the east.

During this time the French were closely associated for trade and defense with the Huron Indians, who then inhabited southern Ontario west of the Toniatto River (Jones Creek). The English, whose assets on this continent consisted of thirteen colonies on the east coast south of the St. Lawrence River, were favoured with the friendship of the Six Nations of Iroquois, whose range included most of New York State.

Before the British had decided what to do with their newly won wilderness north of the St. Lawrence, the colonies to the south began protesting against British taxation without representation in Parliament. On July 4, 1776, the 13 colonies declared independence from Britain, and there ensued a fight which dragged out until 1783. Contrary to the expectations of many, the rebel forces expelled the British, and those among the colonies who had shown loyalty to the crown, including many of the Six Nations of Indians, were forced to flee as refugees to Canada.

Governor Haldimand was forced to make a hurried assessment of Upper Canada to determine where the Loyalists could best be settled, and then to survey the townships, lots and concessions. In September, 1783, he sent Lt. Gersham French, an assistant to the Surveyor-General, on an exploratory expedition in search of farm land in the interior of the province. His party consisted of seven soldiers, two "Canadians", and an indian guide in two bark canoes. They ascended the Ottawa River from Montreal to the Rideau River, then went up the Rideau, stopping frequently to send parties inland on foot. He reported a high percentage of excellent farmland on both banks until he reached the head of the Rideau River. He descended from Newboro to Gananoque in 3½ days, while exploring inland on both shores at intervals. Mr. French's conclusion regarding this part of the journey is as follows: "From our entrance into the River Gananoncoui (his spelling) to its fall into the St. Lawrence, I did not discover as much good land well situated as would serve one farmer." He also passed judgement on the virgin timber that clothed the entire country, in these words: "The timber is neither too heavy or too light and in general is very tall and straight without any underbush, and I suppose that a man will be able to clear, in the American method, an acre fit for seeding in eight days."

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