



# Forestory

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## Contents

Chair's Message .....	3
Real Loggers Wore Boots .....	5
Native Canadians Role in the Birth of Forest Conservation in Ontario .....	7
Ken Armson: A Life Dedicated to Forests .....	13
The Canadian Forestry Association 1900-2016 .....	16
History of the Kapuskasing - Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company .....	19
Conservation by the People .....	23
Book Overview: Manitoulin Island – Hearsay and Recollections Volume 3 (of 5) – Tales of the Timbermen and Fishermen.....	26
Book Review: The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River .....	27
Pines in the Sand tells the story of the Lemke family .....	29
In Memoriam .....	30
Remembering Ken Armson, O.C. ....	31

## ***Tribute to Ken Armson, Dufferin County Forest History Tour and plenty more***



**Butternut tree at the Main Tract of the Dufferin County Forest.**

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## ***Request for Content***

Do you have an interesting story to tell about some aspect of forest history in Ontario? Or are you prepared to write an article for the newsletter on some aspect of forest history? Do you know of interesting photographs, documents, websites or other items that would be suitable for inclusion in the newsletter? Do you have a comment about something you read in a previous issue? If so, contact Journal Editor, Caroline Mach, R.P.F., at [editor@fhso.ca](mailto:editor@fhso.ca). Deadlines are April 1 and October 1.

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# Chair's Message

**By: Jim Farrell**

It's hard to put a price on the value of a good neighbour. Going back in history, even to the days of the initial exploration and settlement of Canada, we colonizers were often, initially, treated as good neighbours and taught to survive brutally long and cold winters and blistering hot and pest 'rich' summers. Later, pioneering settlers relied on each other to clear land, build homes, barns, schools and churches and create communities. With growth comes change and much of this support now often falls to governments, but we all know, from our own communities, the value of a good neighbour. They are there to cut your grass or shovel your snow when you are away, to help you out during an ice storm and to keep you fully briefed on the latest local gossip...priceless. So, what do you do when your great neighbour moves out and the one from hell moves in...next door? I guess we are going to find out!

The special edition of *Our Forest Woodlander* (Ontario Woodlot Association (OWA) and Forests Canada) dedicated to forest history was published in winter 2024 and by all accounts was very well received and quite popular. I invite you all to come to our website to have a look. [Special Forest History Issue of Our Forest/Woodlander magazine](#). This issue announced the first honorary lifetime member of the OWA, our founding President Ken Armson, who very sadly passed away on Dec 9, 2024. [KENNETH ARMSON Obituary \(2024\) - Toronto, ON - The Globe and Mail](#). FHO worked closely with the family in advising the forestry community and assisting with arrangements. We were well represented at Ken's Celebration of Life on January 11, 2025, at Mt Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto and delivered a flower arrangement.

After several months of planning and design work we now have a new standup FHO banner and associated pamphlets promoting the value of joining our organization. They had their coming out party at the February Forests Canada conference and were on display at the April Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA) meeting in Hamilton. You can take a look at the banner in the article about the Forests Canada Conference [Forest History Ontario at The Forestry Conference 2025](#).

Our Annual Meeting was held virtually on February 11 and included an excellent presentation by two researchers working on the Tembec story...the entire presentation is available on our website. [Forest History Ontario Annual Meeting Recap](#)

Also in February, FHO was part of a national Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) webinar celebrating forest history; our contribution was a very abbreviated history of the Canadian Forest Service which celebrated 125 years last year. See the presentation here: [https://youtu.be/koVnVqng\\_L4?si=sGsK\\_h20hbtsm-&t=172](https://youtu.be/koVnVqng_L4?si=sGsK_h20hbtsm-&t=172)

FHO moderated a very well attended session at the Forests Canada Conference on February 20 in Toronto. The session celebrated ten years of Women in Wood and panelists included Caroline Mach (recently retired Dufferin County Forest Manager and Editor of this erudite journal) and Lacey Rose, Renfrew County Forester. See link above for an overview of the session and [A Recap of The Forest Conference | Forests Canada](#) for a summary of the conference.

Our most recent electronic newsletter is also available at <https://us21.campaign-archive.com/?u=bb9ebd8640893dfe217060ee9&id=da11ee98d6>. Thank you, Amy Howitt.

Several of our Sault Ste Marie members have been working with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and partners to mark the 25<sup>th</sup>



*(Continued on page 4)*



(Continued from page 3)

anniversary of the establishment of the Millenium Forest on June 5, 2025. The forest demonstrates forest types in the Great Lakes and Boreal Forest Regions of Ontario. Stay tuned for more information on our website and in our newsletter at the date approaches.

Planning is underway for our next FHO field tour on June 13 in the Dufferin County area and more details on the tour and how to register will be available and distributed shortly.

For our members, readers, and supporters with woodlands affected by the spring ice storm in south-central Ontario, our thoughts are with you, particularly if you also suffered through days with no hydro, cellphone and wi-fi service. Hopefully, your wait was not too long to have these restored, but the effects on many of these carefully stewarded woodlands will be evident for decades.

I would like to thank all the authors and contributors to the spring 2025 issue of *Forestory*, particularly our dedicated and efficient editor Caroline Mach. As a volunteer organization we rely entirely on members to organize events, contribute articles and stories, and deliver activities and are very grateful for all their work and all members for their ongoing support. I again remind you that we have a very functional 'DONATE' button on our website ([Home](#)) and encourage you to give it a whirl and renew if your membership has lapsed .

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## Save the Date!

Forest History Ontario is presenting a forest history tour on **June 13, 2025** in **Dufferin County**. We will be visiting County and private land properties and will see both plantations and natural forests. We will travel through some of the nicest scenery in southwestern Ontario with numerous hills and many expansive views. We look forward to showing you unique and hidden sites in Dufferin. Join us. Details coming soon!



# REAL LOGGERS WORE BOOTS

by Andrew Hind

Like hotel and tavern proprietors everywhere across northern Ontario, Annie Sword welcomed many loggers at her establishment. These rough-and-ready workers had powerful thirsts and money to be parted from. They were good customers, in other words. And yet, Annie would sit on the front porch of her Maple Lake Hotel, stop each approaching lumberman, and politely but firmly ask each one to stand before her for inspection. Annie would overlook many who were unwashed or shabbily dressed without so much as a pause, but it was the boots that drew her attention.

What, exactly, was she looking for?

The logging industry generated a variety of unique tools that served highly specific purposes in the woods, on the river, or at the mill. Among the most important were caulked boots. The short spikes driven into the soles of these boots allowed for extra grip – often literally the difference between life and death – but, as Annie and other tavern owners lamented, they were murder on hardwood flooring.

While caulk boots were invented for the logging industry, their inspiration is ancient indeed. Roman legionnaires wore caligae, a hobnailed sandal. Iterations have been in use ever since so that the design was altered and perfected for the 19th-century timber industry.

There were three distinct phases in the logging days of old, and the caulk boot was vital for each of them. First trees were felled and cut into saw logs. These logs were skidded to clearings



that had cut along the network of haul roads threading through the logging area. Typically starting in January, the second phase saw logs hauled by horse-drawn sleigh to the bank of river or lake. Finally, in the spring, the logs would be rolled into the water to float miles downstream to awaiting saw-mills or railway sidings.

Every step of the logging process was dangerous. Caulk boots were designed to mitigate some of the risk. Sometimes referred to as calk or cork boots, caulk boots were leather, nail-soled boots worn for traction in the snow-covered woods, on the ice roads over which logs were sledded, and while skipping from log to log in the spring drives that sent the harvested timber barreling down swollen rivers.

Caulk boots were so important that loggers would willingly spend \$8 or \$10 on a good pair – a significant investment in view of the fact they might only earn \$1 per day.

Boots might be ankle height or come up to the mid-calf. It was important to get a pair that was a little on the big side because loggers found that tight boots made for cold feet. At the same time, a bit of extra space allowed for an extra pair of warm, woollen socks to be worn. And finally, when wet – which they often were, especially on log drives – leather boots would contract.

Loggers would typically wear pants that were cut off just below the knee. It was a matter of safety because otherwise caulks might catch in the bottom of their pants and then trip them, with potentially disastrous repercussions.





Horse Shoe Falls, near Falding, Parry Sound, Ont.

Besides, loggers reasoned, the lower leggings would soon be ragged, so they might as well cut them short. For warmth and protection, loggers would instead wear long socks that rose above the knee.

Over the course of a logging season, the spikes of a caulk boot would inevitably wear down. Rather than buy new boots for the following winter, many sought to save money by simply getting new spikes driven into the soles. This could be done a few times before the soles had to be replaced as well. In such a way, fine-crafted leather boots might last a lifetime.

Caulk boots were most prized by those involved in the dangerous spring drive, shepherding saw logs downstream. Their lives depended on a good grip because, despite being required to literally stand atop logs as they floated down the river, sometimes even through stretches of white water, few drivers knew how to swim.

River drive crews were divided into two groups: a 'bow gang' at the head, who shepherded logs through rapids and dams, and the 'tail gang' who brought up the rear by rolling stranded logs back into the current. Those on the bow gang were at the most risk. If a single log got jammed into a rock or shoreline, as it often did along rocky chutes or falls, hundreds or even thousands of others would begin to pile up atop and behind it. It was the job of those on the bow gang to race out mid-river and break up the logjam, using peaveys (a long pike), axes, or even dynamite in extreme cases. It was treacherous work because the jam could unexpectedly erupt, potentially crushing or drowning the logger.

Those who died on a drive were buried along the side of the river; their caulk boots nailed to a nearby tree to mark the grave. Over the passage of time, the location of most of these wilderness graves has been forgotten.

Even with these risks, many lined up for work in the logging camps and on the spring drives. Boys as young as 12 would hit up jobbers and river bosses for their first job. I've heard anecdotes about pint-sized caulk boots that had been made for these youngsters, but I've yet to see one.

The logging industry has evolved over the past two centuries, but caulk boots remain an essential part of a logger's gear. They've been adopted by other industries as well, including forestry and arboriculture.

And what of Annie Sword? Did she turn away the loggers she caught wearing caulked boots? Hardly. She'd kindly ask that they remove their footwear before entering. Should they refuse, she'd instead put two wooden shingles down on the verandah, the loggers would stomp on them, and away they'd go into the taproom to quench their thirst, shuffling along on shingle-clad boots.



# ***Native Canadians Role in the Birth of Forest Conservation in Ontario***

**By: John Bacher**



**Painting by John Bacher.**

Native Canadians played an important role in changing attitudes towards forests in Ontario through their influence on an intellectual group of farm leaders active in the Ontario Fruit Growers Association. (OFGA). This great transformation took place between the visit of a delegation of the OFGA to the Chiefswood home of a Mohawk Confederacy Chief of the Wolf Clan, George Johnson in the summer of 1878, and his death there on February 19, 1884.

Until Johnson shook up the OFGA in the last several years of his life while in his sixties, there was a disturbing consensus about the desirability among Euro-Canadians of rapid deforestation in what after Confederation in 1867, became known as the Province of Ontario. The prevailing attitude was well summed up by a pioneer conservationist, John Squair.

John Squair was married to a daughter of the maternal grandfather, Edmund Prout, of Ontario's first forester, Edmund Zavitz. Prout owned a farm on the Oak Ridges Moraine, in Darlington Township, around Bowmanville. The extended family, including Zavitz's mother, Dorothy, witnessed the desertification caused by deforestation there, which caused sand to blow into their homes, soiling food.

Squair, who became a Professor of French at the University of Toronto, described the ecocidal attitude towards forests that he witnessed in his youth. He wrote that, "In the beginning there was sometimes a feeling that a tree was rather an enemy rather than a friend; a thing to be rooted out and burnt up. The burning of the log-heaps in the evening after the day's logging was done was an occasion for rejoicing and passing around the whiskey jug. It might well have been a season of regrets." [1]

The extended Prout-Squair family understood the economic value of forests. Squair wrote of how trees supported remarkable artisan wood craftsmen, who turned wood into beautiful products such as furniture. This cast of wood crafters disappeared along with the forests that provided their income. [2]

Prout was awakened from the drunken stupor causing blindness to the folly of deforestation recorded by Squair, an uncle of Edmund Zavitz, through his involvement in the OFGA. Prout was an apple grower. He had an apple nursery and sold young trees to orchardists. Through his involvement in the OFGA Prout was involved in Johnson's refocusing of the organization. This was accomplished by its members' visits to Chiefswood and Johnson's presentations, accompanied by fellow Mohawk conservationists, to the OFGA's annual meetings.

The OFGA, founded in 1862, did not begin its role as a force for forest protection, until it had an intense debate at a Canada Day meeting held in Stratford in 1878. The debate was sparked by the reforestation success of a Mohawk Confederacy Chief, George Johnson. Before the OFGA was

*(Continued on page 8)*



(Continued from page 7)

awakened to the potential for reforestation by this visit, its concerns were predominately about the benefits of fruit growing and the health benefits of fruit consumption.

Opposition from recognized Native bands to deforestation began following the War of 1812, around the time when forests had ceased to be the dominant landform in the colony of Upper Canada south of the Canadian Shield. Full-time Forest Wardens were hired to prosecute illegal logging by the most powerful Native group, the Six Nations Confederacy. These concerns were linked to the Confederacy's conflict with the Grand River Navigation company. Their canalization of the Grand River facilitated illegal logging and encroachment by squatters on the Confederacy's lands along the Grand River. Under the leadership of a Mohawk Confederacy Chief George Johnson, (Onwanosnyhon) an effective regulatory system, similar to municipal tree by-laws, which emerged in Ontario after 1946, was developed. [3]

In addition to leading efforts to protect Haudenosaunee woodlots Johnson conducted reforestation around his home, Chiefswood. In doing so he followed the practice of his ancestors to plant into forests edible species of trees. The trees he planted were native Carolinian species of the *Juglans* family. These were black walnut, butternut, and various hickories (shagbark, pignut, shellbark and mockernut). [4]

At its 1878 Annual General Meeting (AGM) the OFGA had an "animated" and "earnest" discussion. It was on, "The nut bearing trees of the province; and their adaptability for ornamental purposes, as well as a source of financial profit to the farmer."

After their heated convention the OFGA selected two members, Charles Arnold of Paris, and John Freed of Hamilton, to report on "the groves of Chief Johnson." They were accompanied on their visit to Chiefswood by two newspaper journalists. These were W. T. Swale of the Caledonia Sachem and a reporter from the Hamilton Spectator. The four pilgrims met at the Caledonia railway station and then travelled over the Caledonia Road to Chiefswood.

As the OFGA emissaries travelled along Caledonia Road they were struck by the treeless ecological devastation until they reached the boundaries of the Six Nations Reservation about a mile from Chiefswood. Five years before their pilgrimage, one of the largest lumbermills in Ontario, owned by a prominent businessman, James Little, closed down in Caledonia.

Deforestation throughout southwestern Ontario forced Little to close his Caledonia lumber operation in 1873. He moved to the still relatively well forested Montreal region of Quebec, close to the rocky Canadian Shield, where Euro-Canadian farming had not displaced woodlands.

A few years after the pilgrimage to Chiefswood an activist in the OFGA, William Phipps, who would take up conservation after the Chiefswood gathering, lamented that in the surrounding Brant County, "With the regular clearing of our forests, we have no more forests left to clear." As a result, he warned that springs had dried up and water supplies were imperiled. [5]



Painting by John Bacher.

After their pilgrimage was completed, Arnold and Freed explained to the OFGA the vivid contrast between the "sterile appearance" of the denuded landscape along the Caledonia Road, and the "lovely native park" at Chiefswood. They were charmed at how Chiefswood towered above the Grand River "in three broad and beautiful natural terraces some seventy feet or more in height."

What Johnson did with the OFGA representatives and the two journalists who accompanied them was in effect to explain

(Continued on page 9)

*(Continued from page 8)*

and renew the sacred agreements of the Haudenosaunee with the British crown known as the Covenant Chain. These sacred agreements were not static; they were supposed to be solemnly renewed, to clean what was termed the grimy rust off of the chain. The ugly deforestation around Six Nations outside the reserve epitomized this corrupting grime, slime and rust. This the Chiefswood meeting and subsequent OFGA gatherings in the next six years would polish away so the chain would again shine.

Johnson used a calumet passed down by his grandparents, George and Helen Johnson, from colonial New York, to explain to the OFGA delegation what the Covenant Chain meant. The calumet had a beautifully carved pipe bowl, on which were carved the words "E. Milne fecit." The Covenant Chain was symbolized by an English army officer and an Indian Chief linked together. Directly above the chain of friendship was a sun, and below the two men a fire. The sun and fire symbolized the hope that no dark misunderstandings should cloud the friendship between the Crown and the Haudenosaunee, and that the friendship should be forever warm. Johnson also explained how his own life had upheld the principles of the Covenant Chain. He displayed to the delegates the ceremonial sword and tomahawk he had been given for his role in the suppression of the 1837 Upper Canadian Rebellion. [6]

What stunned the already dazzled delegation was the Johnson's family guided tour of their restoration grove. Freed and Arnold later explained to the OFGA how, "Your committee was informed by the Chief and his very intelligent and communicative son, that there were growing on their estate some 800 walnut, 300 butternut, and 200 hickory trees of various kinds. Many of these trees were noble specimens-especially the walnuts. One upon the terrace below, almost in front of the house, was a really majestic tree, with a large, massive globular head of some 120 feet in circumference. The lower branches nearly touching the ground, and the head rising up at least (40 feet) in height, and every branch drooping with its large load of fruit, some specimens measuring eight inches in circumference.

Your committee was informed by the worthy Chief that he sold-or we might say, gave away walnuts for \$2 for a wagon-box full, and the butternuts at 50c per bag. They found these trees and the hickories....were about 12 or 14 acres in extent and were without exception the most in the Dominion." [7]

With amazement Freed and Arnold reported how, "Wagon load after wagon load had been driven off by friends of the Chief from Brantford, Caledonia and Ancaster and elsewhere and still there are thousands upon the ground." They reassured the OFGA that "the quality of the fruit is fine." [8]

The delightful dinner the delegation received further reinforced the positive lessons of their Chiefswood experience. Freed and Arnold expressed thanks for "the beautiful repast provided by the good lady and daughters our host." They returned home, much gratified with their visit to the Chief of the Six Nations Indians, who two hundred years ago, owned a large portion of this continent. [9]

Based on their Chiefswood experience Freed and Arnold became vigorous champions of reforestation in the OFGA. In a report they wrote following their visit the two explained that "they have no doubt that it would be a good investment for many a young man to plant walnut trees on their sloping riverbanks, that area too steep for cultivation. That in time the timber alone would lend much to increase the glory and wealth of the Dominion and award the planter. There are tens of thousands of farms in Ontario that would be very much improved both in real value by planting the various kinds of nut-bearing trees we have recommended." They found that, "A great many homesteads throughout the country would be much improved in appearance by the planting of walnut, butternut, or hickory trees and beside the shade afforded a rich profit could be made within a few years from the products therefrom." Complimenting their accounts, the Hamilton Spectator reporter wrote that walnut planting would prove to be "a profitable investment to the farmer." [10]

Following glowing press accounts and the publication of Freed and Arnold's testimony, more OFGA

*(Continued on page 10)*

members made pilgrimages to Chiefswood. One was William Burke of Ottawa. At an OFGA meeting he urged members "to obtain nuts of the black walnut, or butternut, or young trees...at trifling cost from Chief Johnson at the Six Nations Reserve." Another reforestation missionary inspired by what he saw at Chiefswood was an OFGA Vice-President, William Roy of Owen Sound. He reported on the "fine walnut grove of Chiefswood of Chief Johnson at Tuscarora." [11]

Roy and another OFGA conservation activist, Thomas Beall of Lindsay, visited Chiefswood to investigate and subsequently refute claims that economical crops could not be grown beneath black walnuts. Beall found that a variety of raspberries, the Mammoth Cluster, recommended by Johnson, did do especially well under the shade of black walnuts. Roy found from his experience at Chiefswood that the shade of black walnuts produced "new luxuriant grass" excellent for pasture. Beall told the OFGA that planting black walnuts was the best remedy against the "wanton destruction of our forests by the early settler", since he was not aware of "any other hardwood that grows as rapidly." [12]

Edmund Zavitz, a fervent reader of 19th century accounts of Ontario forests, found that until the 1870s "very little record exists of public interest in the future of forests." In addition to reading the new accounts of concerns for forests following the 1878 Chiefswood polishing of the Covenant Chain, he benefitted from his maternal grandfather's participation in the OFGA.

Based on his grandfather's recollections Zavitz viewed the 1879 OFGA AGM as an important turning point in developing more positive public attitudes in Ontario towards the protection of forests. He noted in 1879 at their Hamilton AGM the directors of the OFGA, "to take forestry...under their fostering wing." [13]

The setting for the turning point 1879 OFGA AGM was the magnificent recently opened Second Empire Wentworth County Court House. Its interior as an architectural historian recalled, was dominated by "furnishings employing thick slabs of walnut, all turned, paneled and carved with great skill." [14]

The turning point OFGA AGM had heavy participation from Mohawks of the Six Nations, notably among forest rangers who had shared with George Johnson the personal risks of enforcing the Confederacy's laws to protect forests. The Mohawk OFGA members were heartily welcomed to the Hamilton AGM by the organization's President, the St. Catharines nurseryman and author, Delos Belos Beadle. After his introduction, two of the Mohawks, "were heartily cheered upon taking their seats on the board." [15]

Mohawks also played an important role in the 1880 OFGA AGM held at the Middlesex County Court House in London, Ontario. It also has a magnificent walnut trimmed interior, which Johnson mentioned in his address. Johnson's address focused on how the casings of black walnuts, if harvested at the right time, were excellent for pickling. [16]

To follow up his presentation at the 1880 OFA AGM, two years later an article for the Canadian Horticulturalist by a Mr. Woodard further publicized Johnson's conservationist activities. It detailed how, "Chief Johnson can supply any amount of either black walnuts or butternuts and they will be found the hardiest and easiest to plant." [17]

In the last two years of his life and in the next several years following his death, Johnson's influence grew as OFGA members saw the reality of his description of the significance of Juglans species in southern Ontario's barely surviving forests. The truth of his words could be seen in studying these struggling woodlands and thinking about their decline from healthier conditions in their youth and childhood.

Beadle found that even on the Niagara Peninsula where he lived, black walnut which had survived there longer than in the rest of Ontario, had "all...been cut down." He found that hickories had been similarly wiped out. A painter who was a visitor to Chiefswood, and played the piano there, Homer Watson, depicted Chiefswood's refuge for the black walnut in his painting, "The Nutters." In 1887 a

*(Continued on page 11)*



*(Continued from page 10)*

fruit grower in the Jordan Valley of Niagara, a J. Honsberger, explained how he was awakened to the reality of the need to plant black walnuts to restore the forests of his youth. Honsberger told an 1887 OFGA meeting, "This walnut question is the one that brought me here. The walnut is a native of my native place, and a few years ago the last one disappeared; and being determined that the place was not going to be devoid of walnut tree, I began putting nuts into the ground and I grew some trees." [18]

Although Mohawks dominated the early years of Ontario conservation, they and other Native voices were marginalized following Johnson's death in 1884. Although four children continued to be prominent until the death of his last surviving child, Evelyn, in 1937, they were never in a position to dominate, albeit briefly, the Canadian environmental movement as he was able to do in the early 1880s.

While Johnson's descendants owned Chiefswood until Evelyn donated it to the Six Nations Band upon her death in 1937, they could not continue it as a tree nursery for reforestation, a role that had begun in 1880 by the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) in Guelph. Following Johnson's call the OAC had a reforestation woodland based on black walnuts, which, like other early plantings, was cut down for an athletic complex. Complex reasons caused Johnson's heirs to simply not have the funds to continue the Juglans based tree nursery and Chiefswood was leased for family revenues.

The marginalization of Native conservationist voices following George Johnson's death was encouraged by separation between OAC and Native farming communities such as Six Nations in Ontario. In part this was encouraged by the residential school system, which spectacularly failed to produce university entrance students. While better results were achieved by the Six Nations Confederacy (after 1923, Band Council operated), Thomas School, Natives were still cut off from participation in the Experimental Union. (EU) The EU became by the 1890s, the leading conservationist force in Ontario, replacing the role played by the OFGA. The EU persuaded the Ontario government to create the first public tree nursery in Ontario in 1905, which was operated by an OAC Lecturer, Edmund Zavitz. [19]

While Johnson, through his renewal of the Covenant Chain, set in motion a process which restored Ontario's dwindling forests, the decline in a Native voice for conservation meant that Aboriginal communities benefitted less than the dominant Euro-Canadian population. Foresters who administered the system created by Zavitz were Euro-Canadians. Band Councils did not receive any funding comparable to the partnership with municipalities which created County Forests, and later Conservation Authorities. This oppressive situation was encouraged by the denial of any political rights for status Indians until 1960.

Today the programs to restore Ontario's forests built up by Zavitz during his long public career from 1903 to his death in 1968 have largely vanished. The federal government's Two Billion Tree Program keeps on life support the only surviving public nursery in Ontario created for reforestation, the Howard Ferguson Station. Forest cover in Ontario, which tripled during Zavitz's lifetime, is again declining. The closure of the Ferguson Forest Station was prevented, in part, by protests by the Mohawks of Eastern Ontario.

I personally experienced an incident which illustrates how threats to the restored forests of Ontario require the same sort of renewal of the Covenant Chain, to restore the luster of Ontario's woodlands, that George Johnson was able to accomplish between 1878 and 1884. One of the issues that arose at the pivotal OFGA AGM in Hamilton in 1879 was the lack of forest cover on the Niagara Escarpment in the city. This was eventually restored by Zavitz through tree planting in the 1920s. This work was subsequently damaged around 2001 by the Red Hill Creek expressway, opposed by the delegate to the binational Haudenosaunee Environment Committee, who attempted to renew the Covenant Chain pledges protecting Ontario's forests.

A hopeful sign for a renewal of the Covenant Chain after Johnson's polishing with the OFGA that

*(Continued on page 12)*

restored southern Ontario's vanishing forests, was my encounter with an heir to his mission of ecological restoration, a delegate from Six Nations to the Haudenosaunee Environment Committee, Norm Jacobs. After his death an environmental studies scholarship was created by the Six Nations Band Council in his honor, which addresses the problem of Haudenosaunee being excluded from the management of the forests their activism in the Gilded Age helped to restore.

## **Endnotes**

- 1) John Squair, "History of Darlington and Clarke Townships", ( Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1927), p3.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) John A. Noon, "Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois", (New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, 1949), 92-94. After the stormy times of Johnston fostering forest protection at Six Nations his approach became the norm throughout southern Ontario.
- 4) Charles Arnold and John Freed, "Report of the nut-bearing grove of G. H. M. Johnson", Sessional Papers of the Ontario Legislature", Volume X, Part one, 1877.
- 5) William Phipps, "Report of the Clerk of Forestry", Sessional Papers of the Ontario Legislature, 1887.
- 6) Arnold and Freed, loc.cit.
- 7) Ibid.
- 8) Ibid.
- 9) Ibid.
- 10) Ibid.,
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- 12) Ibid.
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# Ken Armson: A Life Dedicated to Forests

By: Jim Farrell



Ken Armson

Ken Armson is being named as the first Honorary Lifetime member of the Ontario Woodlot Association, for very good reasons. More than any one person, Ken has advanced forestry knowledge, education, policy, practice, and history and is widely recognized and respected in forestry circles, and beyond, throughout Ontario and Canada. While arguably his crowning achievement was receiving the Order of Canada in 2017, but I suggest his legacy of a lifetime enthusiasm for learning, curiosity to discover and passion for forests that he passed to the thousands of students, colleagues, friends and followers over the decades, is truly remarkable and all of his honours and recognition are richly deserved and hard earned. A short summary of his story follows.

While Ken was born in Toronto (Newtonbrook neighbourhood to be more precise) in 1927, his parents were both born in England and had strong attachments to the home country. The family, including Ken and his sister, moved to England in 1938 settling in Worcester, a town just outside of Birmingham. Ken, being a serious and capable student achieved his Oxford University Higher School Certificate at the age of 17 in 1944 and braced to be 'called up' for military service but used that time to start his practical forestry experience by thinning Douglas fir plantations. In the winter of 1945, after being 'called-up' Ken opted to enlist with the Canadian army and received training in driving a tank, which no doubt came in handy, later on, in pushing novel ideas through an obstinate bureaucracy. Ken spent much of his war time service on a motorcycle as a despatch rider, which as you can imagine came with a fair share of spills and close calls. Ken returned to Canada in 1947 determined to succeed and make a difference in forestry starting at the University of Toronto. I do not imagine he realized at the time that a few years after graduation he would return to the faculty for a highly successful career in education and research... but only his first career.

With war time service, a forestry degree, and a number of summers in the field, Ken was ready and started in the research branch of the then Department of Lands and Forests in Maple where he exercised his passion for forest soils. His talents as a researcher and educator caught the eye of the University of Toronto Forestry Dean, Bernie Sisam, and he was offered a faculty position. Ken dove enthusiastically into overhauling and rebuilding the undergraduate forest soils apprenticeship, making it a key building block of the curriculum. Ken instinctively knew that it is the soil that grows the trees that make up the forest ecosystem and successful forest management relied heavily on understanding that relationship. After only a short time on the faculty, Ken was accepted for post-graduate work in forest soils at Oxford University strengthening an already impressive capacity in soils.

(Continued on page 14)

*Editor's Note:* This article was originally published in *Our Forest Woodlander* (Winter 2024), a collaborative issue of *Our Forest* and *The Ontario Woodlander*.





**Ken Armson, in his element, hosting a public seminar on forest soils in Durham County, north of Pickering.**

After completing his studies at Oxford, Ken returned to the University of Toronto and, all in, spent 26 years successfully delivering on the herculean task of educating young minds and inspiring generations of foresters... myself included. Ken was passionate about getting students out to the bush, listening to foresters' real-world issues and questions, moving Ontario's forest management system from merely harvesting to including the full cycle of management and trying on new ideas. Ken's expertise and laser focus on the importance of understanding soils equipped him to be a leading voice on the value of managing nursery soils in terms of fertility, health, texture, etc. which was essential as Ontario continued to invest in and grow the tree nursery programs across the province. Poor quality planting stock resulted in poor quality forests. Ken became the trusted go-to expert on forest management, silviculture and soils sought after by government (Department of Lands and Forests, later Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources) and forest companies who were taking an increasing interest in forest management. So much so that in 1975, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) asked him to prepare a report on forest management in Ontario examining the roles of the landowner (the government) and those of the primary tenant (forest industry) in terms of planning, regenerating, and tending Ontario's forests. This was the catalyst that triggered tectonic changes in how

Ontario would manage its forests for the next 50 years. This led to Ken taking on a full-time role with OMNR designing, negotiating, and getting approval for entirely new model of collaboration between government and industry called Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) which were at the forest policy forefront in Canada. In an interview recently posted on the Forest History Ontario website [Home \(fhso.ca\)](http://Home(fhso.ca)), Ken indicated that the most satisfying period of his career was the year that he spent travelling the province preparing this report and developing, with colleagues, Ontario's new FMA system.

In the early 1980s, with the northern Crown forests being brought into the FMA regime, Ken turned his attention to the private land forests of Ontario. While arguably the most productive in the province (those in the south) they had seen several successful but disparate programs, but no overarching government policy for private forest lands. Tasked by Deputy Minister Bill Foster, Ken led the two-year development of *Private Land Forests: A Public Resource*, a comprehensive and forward-looking report, which unfortunately did not attract the necessary political will to make the significant changes that were suggested.

Unlike most humans, Ken did not stop there... he was just getting started! In 1976 Ken was invited by the Ministry of Forests in British Columbia to help them sort out their fledgling container seedling program. The next year he published a landmark treatise titled *Forest Soils*. Ken was in high demand from major pulp and paper companies seeking his advice on silviculture and seedling production. After leaving the Faculty of Forestry, Ken was recruited by the OMNR and started as Chief Forester for the province, later also taking on the role of Executive Director of the Forest Resources Group, both jobs out of Queen's Park in Toronto. During that period Ken championed professionalism in forestry, evaluation and learning from earlier work (particularly regeneration) and making forest information more readily available and understandable. After leaving the OMNR in 1989, at the age of 62 when many would be planning their retirements and eyeing a new set of golf clubs, Ken launched into another passion, auditing of forest management. Over the next 10 years he authored *Canadian*

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

*Forests-A Primer* as well as *Ontario Forests- A Historical Perspective*, both widely respected and sought after texts on forests and forest management. Ken went on to author numerous important historical books and articles in the years that followed establishing himself as the pre-eminent forest historian in Ontario and perhaps Canada. In 2009 Ken established the Forest History Society of Ontario (now Forest History Ontario) and was President and Chair until 2014, but is still the valued and respected mentor and patron that guides the organization today. His lifetime of dedication to Canada's forests and educating us all on its values and stewardship was nationally recognized when he was named to the Order of Canada in 2016 (conferred in 2017).

While this is a much-abbreviated selection of life and career events of Ken Armson, I encourage you get a copy of his book *Into the Woods: My Life in Forestry* by Kenneth A. Armson, 2019, Burnstown Publishing House... and settle in for a great read.

*Editor's Note:* Sadly, Ken Armson passed away on December 9, 2024. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an In Memoriam and a Remembrance.

# The Canadian Forestry Association 1900-2016

By: Dave Lemkay

This brief history cannot do justice to the enormous legacy built from the 116 years of work undertaken by the Canadian Forestry Association (CFA). But first, a little background: German influencers in America such as Dr. Bernard Fernow, Gifford Pinchot and Dr. C. A. Schenck brought forest conservation matters to the forefront in Canada. It was their influence that provided the genesis of the formation of the Canadian Forestry Association in 1900.



**CFA Conservation Officer vehicle**

Until the association was sadly dissolved in 2016, the CFA had been the oldest continuously operated conservation organization in Canada, advocating for and supporting the protection and wise use of forest, water and wildlife resources. From its beginnings, the CFA's slate of officers included influential individuals from constituencies across Canada. Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière, the inaugural president, became the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia from 1900 to 1906.

The first national forest convention was convened in 1906 in the Railway Committee Room of the House of Commons. The honorary president was The Right Honourable Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier joined by His Excellency The Governor General Lord Earl Grey. For the next century, the Governors General of Canada continued to be the association's official patrons.

The Prime Minister had said "we must consider, and before it is too late, address questions of the highest importance to the future wellbeing of this Dominion and its forests and water resources." Throughout the decades to follow, conservation messaging waxed and waned with the two world wars creating gaps. Fast forward to the 1950s, when the association was prolific in its influence. The affiliated provincial forestry associations such as the CFA of British Columbia, the CFA of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and the Prairie Provinces Forest Association were soon to become autonomous, the Ontario Forestry Association had become its own entity in 1954. Soon each province had its own association, and the CFA took on the legal status as a Federation of Provincial Forestry Associations.



**CFA Tree Planting Campaign Rail Car**

From the 1920s onward, the conservation message was delivered by dedicated CFA representatives travelling by car and making

*(Continued on page 17)*

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(Continued from page 16)

stops at small communities. These were exciting events at a time when even motion pictures were a rarity. In larger fashion, the message was delivered by the Conservation and Tree Planting railway cars that were shunted from town to town gratis on the CN and CP lines throughout the Prairies, Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. From 1920 to 1973, Alan Beaven, assisted by Paul Pageau for many of those years, was the mastermind behind this extensive operation. Explaining the tenets of planting trees for windbreaks on prairie farms to promote soil conservation after the dustbowl 1930s was an important undertaking. Continued tree planting in every province was managed cooperatively with provincial partners with sponsorship from Batesville Casket Company and Melita Coffee.

More than an interesting anecdote, there is the story of a British man, Archie Belaney, who in 1930 contributed an article to the *Canadian Forest and Outdoors* magazine entitled "The Vanishing Life of the Wild" under the name Grey Owl. At the annual convention of the CFA in Montreal in 1931, Grey Owl was a keynote presenter, and his Canadian Parks Branch film, *The Beaver People*, was shown in public for the first time. This event set the stage for Belaney's "Grey Owl" persona to flourish. Appearing as Grey Owl and dressed in Indigenous regalia, Belaney made numerous speeches throughout Canada, the United States and England.

In the years following the first conference in 1906, the CFA was engaged in joint conferences with several organizations: the Society of American Foresters in 1952, a Resources Conference in 1954, a National Forestry Conference in 1956, and the British Commonwealth Conference in 1967. In more recent times, the 1986 National Forestry Congress in Ottawa was jointly organized with Canadian Pulp and Paper Association. The year 2000 marked the centenary of the CFA. With the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, a joint National Forestry Conference was convened in Thunder Bay. This event coincided with the designation of Ontario's northwest as Forest Capital of Canada that year.



COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL FOR THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

**Golden Jubilee Medal recipients in 2003 included Mary Van den Heuvel, Nova Scotia; Dr. Ken Armson, Toronto; Jim Ferguson, Renfrew; Dr. Bruce Dancik, Edmonton; Marie Router, Toronto; Dr. John Naismith, Thunder Bay; Barry Waito, Minnetonka, Manitoba; Tony Rotherham, Bolton, QC; Dr. Fred Pollett, Ottawa; Dr. Peggy Smith, Thunder Bay; Dr. Gilbert Paillé, Montreal; Jim Cayford, Guelph; Ed Lawrence, Ottawa; Dr. Hamish Kimmins, Denman Island, BC; and in absentia, Ike Barber, Vancouver; Diane Beaven, Winnipeg; Dr. Don Fowler, Fredericton; and Debra Wortley, Whitehorse. Medal Presenters: Dave Lemkay and Dr. Yvan Hardy.**

Now managed by the Canadian Institute of Forestry, the Forest Capital of Canada Program began under the aegis of the CFA in 1979 and continues to this day. Forest Capital designations have spanned the country from Corner Brook to Vancouver and many places in between. (This and other records can be found with a search on the Canadian Institute of Forestry website: [www.cif-ifc.org](http://www.cif-ifc.org).)

The ninth National Forest Congress was jointly convened with the National Forest Strategy Coalition in Ottawa in 2003; it was followed by the 10th congress in 2006 in Gatineau, Québec. It is important to note that in 2003, the CFA was granted the opportunity to award twenty worthy forest leaders with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

From its inception, the CFA fulfilled its mandate by playing a vital role in educating Canadians, young and old,

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

about the country's forests and waterways. It published the *Canadian Forest Journal*, *The Canadian Forestry Magazine* and the *Illustrated Forest and Outdoors Magazine* that later morphed into *Field and Stream*. *The Children's Book of Trees* and program-related material on forest fires, tree planting and certified Canadian Tree Farms were distributed to Canadians. Widely accepted participatory campaigns included the establishment of National Forest Week and popular regional and national poster contests. The Canadian Smokey Bear trademark was officially licensed by the USDA Forest Service to the CFA in 1958, and the forest fire prevention message was aggressively promoted. The Canada's Forest Teaching Kit series spanned ten years with informative booklets being supplied to elementary school teachers across the country. Sponsorship for this outreach was generously provided by many forestry corporations and provincial ministries. The Envirothon Program was incorporated in Canada by the CFA on behalf of the provincial associations with sponsorship by Canon Canada. The program continues now under the auspices of the provincial associations.

Another CFA contribution was the supplying of the ceremonial Christmas tree to Rideau Hall, the home of the Governor General, and the Honourary Patron of the CFA. This annual tradition was an offshoot of the Forest Capital of Canada designations that recognized the significance of forests and forestry in municipalities and regions across the country.

Just before Christmas, a special tree was sent to Ottawa. In some cases, a given Forest Capital was not able to offer a handsome enough conifer. To compensate, the CFA would call on Doug Drysdale of Drysdale Christmas Tree Farms, who would do the honours, delivering a groomed, twelve-foot Fraser Fir. For many years the Rideau Hall Christmas tree unveiling was adopted as an official event. Apart from the plethora of local community celebrations, one special nicety was a visit to Rideau Hall that the annual Christmas tree event provided. Their Excellencies would graciously receive delegates from the CFA, including committee members of the respective Forest Capital. But when in 2005, the "Christmas Tree" was inadvertently described as "Holiday Tree" by Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, the public controversy over that faux pas ended the tradition.



**CFA delegation with the 26th Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, circa 2001.**

When the CFA was disbanded in 2016, a formal agreement was negotiated with the Canadian Institute of Forestry to inherit the CFA assets. A cash infusion was augmented with supplies of teaching kits, full sets of the various CFA publications and access to sponsored tree-planting contributions. The extensive records from the Canadian Forestry Association, dating back a century, are officially archived with Library and Archives Canada.

During its long history, many Canadians made contributions to the Canadian Forestry Association. To name just a few: general managers Wm McMahan, E.G. Shorten, Robson Black, J.L. Van Camp, Dr. T. S. McKnight, A.D. "Dal" Hall, Glen Blouin, Dan Colligan and Dave Lemkay. The following individuals should also be noted for their contributions to the CFA: Gordon Gallyn, Roxanne Comeau, and presidents W. T. Bill Foster, Dr. Ken Armson, Bill Fullerton, Dr. Doug Redmond, Ivan Balenovic, Susan Gesner and Barry Waito.



# ***History of the Kapuskasing - Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company***

**By: W.D. McIlveen**

The settlement at Kapuskasing on the Mattagami River occurred following the arrival of the National Transcontinental (NTR) in 1911. The name was originally MacPherson Station but was changed to Kapuskasing, First Nations for "Bend in the River" in 1917 to avoid confusion with a place in Manitoba. Kapuskasing was the site of a World War I POW camp in 1914. During that time, 1,300 acres of land was cleared for an experimental farm on the west side of the river. The property was operated as a federal research farm from 1914 until 2012 when the federal government announced that it was closing. The property is in the process of turning into a private cash crop farm.

The Kapuskasing River Pulp and Timber limit was initially awarded to Saphrenous A. Mundy and Elihu Stewart in 1917. Also in 1917, Spruce Falls Pulp and Paper Ltd. was incorporated, but no development took place. The timber limit included 4,500 square kilometers (1,700 sq mi) of timber and hydro leases at Sturgeon Falls, White Spruce Rapids (Spruce Falls) and Big Beaver Falls. In 1925, the Spruce Falls Company Limited was awarded additional timber limits to the north and south, bringing their total limits up to 11,830 square kilometers (4,570 sq mi).

In 1920, the still-unexploited timber limits were sold to Kimberley-Clark as the Spruce Falls Company Limited. The new Spruce Falls Company Ltd. began the development of the first small sulphite pulp mill on the east bank of the Mattagami River. The work on the mill was directed by F.J. Sensenbrenner, a Vice President of Kimberly Clark Corporation for the next 20 years. Early development of the paper mill was plagued by major setbacks. Fire destroyed the construction camp and power project at Sturgeon Falls. A year's supply of pulpwood that was boomed up in the river was washed away in the spring flood. A fire at the new mill killed two workers and brought production to a halt. Eventually, the sulphite mill started up in late 1922 with four 12-ton digesters and a capacity of 115 tons of pulp per day though the initial daily output was nearer 75 tons of pulp. When it began, the mill had 500 employees. Spent liquor was discharged untreated into the Kapuskasing River.



**Figure 1: Spruce Falls Power and Paper mill, Kapuskasing, 1928.**



**Figure 2: Power dam at Spruce Falls, Kapuskasing River, Kapuskasing, date unknown.**

*(Continued on page 20)*

(Continued from page 19)

In the mean time, other activities were underway at Kapuskasing. In 1923, the company constructed a hydro-electric power plant of 75,000 hp to power the operation. For that, a water storage and hydro electric dam was built by Morrow and Beatty Ltd. of Peterborough at Spruce Falls. In anticipation of the growth of the town that would be home to mill workers, the provincial government commissioned the architectural landscape firm of Harries & Hall to create a town plan. That plan incorporated elements of the late 19th century Garden City and City Beautiful town planning movements. The plan for Kapuskasing focused on a healthy living environment, architectural harmony, unified design and visual variety. The plan separated residential and industrial areas and included green spaces. It had parks and public buildings and a variety of innovative street patterns which are still evident today.

The mill owned its own railway known as the Smoky Line. It ran for about 50 miles north to a generating station at Smoky Falls. In addition to serving the Smoky Falls generating station and three other hydro-electric stations, the railway hauled pulpwood to Kapuskasing and served the Smoky Falls residents which had no road access until 1974. In 1946, a 10.5-mile spur line was built to Neshin Lake to pick up wood from the Opatatika River watershed.



**Figure 3: Tractor train used at Spruce Falls Power and Paper bush camps in the 1930s. Collection of Ron Morel.**



**Figure 4: Aerial view of the Spruce Falls Power and Paper mill. Date unknown.**

In 1926, the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company was incorporated under joint ownership of Kimberly-Clark and *The New York Times* with the newspaper holding 49% of the shares. At that time, the operation was expanded to include four newsprint machines that were producing 550 tons/day of paper in 1927. Beginning on July 13, 1928, *The New York Times* was printed entirely on Spruce Falls paper. By 1951, the population of Kapuskasing had reached 5,000 with 1,500 being employed as Spruce Falls workers. The mill was producing 750 tons of newsprint daily. Half of the newsprint was consumed by *The Times* while the rest was sold to other consumers. The company's cutting rights expanded to 6,360 square miles and by the 1970s, as many as 12,500 people lived in the community.

All was not harmony in the timber industry. The Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union, who cut pulpwood for the paper mill in Kapuskasing were in a contract dispute with the mill in 1963. In an attempt to shut down the mill, the Union members attempted to blockade shipments of pulpwood to the mill by independent contractors. On February 11, over 400 strikers arrived at Reesor Siding, located about 55 km west of Kapuskasing. When the strikers arrived to block a log stockpile created by the independent contractors, they were met by 20 armed woodcutters who began shooting. Three of the strikers were killed, another eight wounded. The provincial government was obliged to intervene and settle the strike by arbitration.

Over time, the mill was suffering from aged and outdated equipment. When the mill threatened to lay off 1,000 employees, a consortium of employees, Tembec Inc., and local residents purchased the company, which became Spruce Falls Inc. The new owners invested in a \$360 million modernization.

(Continued on page 21)



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By 1997 the mill's annual paper production totaled 371,000 tonnes of newsprint. In March 1997, Tembec Inc. acquired all of the company shares of Spruce Falls Inc. Tembec Inc. operated the mill as an integrated newsprint operation that was exporting most of its output to the U.S.A. The property was sold to Rayonier Advanced Materials in 2017. In April 2021, GreenFirst Forest Products Inc. bought six lumber mills in Ontario and Quebec, including the newsprint mill in Kapuskasing, for about US\$214 million.

## **Environmental Surveys**

The paper mill was one of a number of locations for environmental contamination surveys conducted by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. A snow sampling program was initiated in 1975 in the vicinity of the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Co. mill. The results demonstrated the presence of a contamination zone of calcium, sodium, sulphate, chloride and aluminum in the snow. The contamination zone was confined to a 400 m radius of the paper mill.

Vegetation and soil sampling was carried out in the vicinity of the mill in 1975, 1976 and 1983. Elevated calcium (and to a lesser extent, magnesium) concentrations in balsam poplar were recorded in 1975 but these decreased in subsequent collections. Values for other elements including sodium, sulphur, chloride, iron, copper, lead and zinc were mostly within the normal range for each respective element. Values of the different elements in the soil were quite variable from location to location and from year to year; however, it can be concluded that soils in the area have relatively high natural calcium, magnesium and iron content.

In July 1976, an area of injury to vegetation in the Town Park between McPherson Avenue and the Kapuskasing River was discovered. The area of injury was mapped. Most injury symptoms were apparent as intercostal necrosis (dead tissue between veins of leaves) typical of acute SO<sub>2</sub> fumigation



**Tembec paper mill, Kapuskasing, July 16, 2006. Photo by Steven McBeaven.**

*(Continued on page 22)*

*(Continued from page 21)*

injury. The most-severely-injured species included paper birch, white ash, red-osier dogwood, peony, currant, willow, cedar and balsam poplar, all of which are known to be sensitive to SO<sub>2</sub>. During the following growing season, a network of sulphation plates was established around the mill. Localized SO<sub>2</sub> injury was observed every year from 1976 to 1980.

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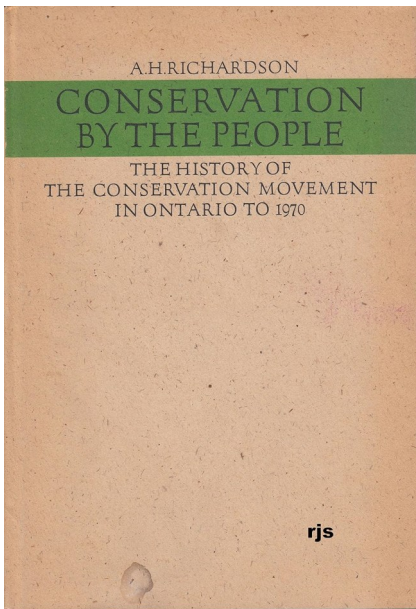
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# Conservation by the People



**Conservation by the People**  
**Arthur Herbert Richardson**  
**University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974**

## **Precis of Chapter 4: Forests for the Future** **By Sherry Hambly**

The first large scale reforestation project was undertaken by the Ganaraska authority. Even though floods had plagued the area, they decided to plant trees before building dams. Their planting program followed the recommendation of the Ganaraska Report to plant trees in the northern part of the authority on the interlobate moraine, an area of approximately 20,000 acres. Reforestation was not new to this area. The Ontario government, in 1905, had sponsored a free tree program for farmers and some of the first plantings occurred in Darlington Township.

The first Ontario forest tree nursery was established at Orono in 1922, supplying several different species of trees for planting. One of the first county forests was established in 1924 in Northumberland County, followed soon after by another in Durham County.

Land acquisition was not an issue for the program but obtaining financing for staff was. The decision was made to bring the land for reforestation under the county forest program of the Department of Lands and Forests. Soon thereafter all authority forests were included in this program. The province also agreed to provide 50 per cent of the funding to acquire lands for planting. Once planted, the lands were transferred to



**In the 1920s and 1930s vast areas of formerly productive farmlands turned into hillocks of blowsand through destructive farming practices and ignorance of conservation techniques. Such scenes are - happily - a thing of the past.**

the province. The first tree in the Ganaraska authority forest was planted on May 14, 1947 by the Honourable Dean Porter.

The early emphasis of the authority reforestation programs was to focus planting on wastelands. The authorities also had a focus on acquiring already forested lands, but this program was slow to develop. Eventually the province agreed to assist in the purchase of such land by providing funding equal to the value of the standing timber.

By 1970, 23 authorities owned a total of 84,739 acres of forest land that was managed by the Department of Lands and Forests. The size of these forest properties varied from 145 acres to 16,617 acres. Two of the most significant forests areas that were acquired included White's Bush (369 acres) on Catfish Creek and Bachus Woods (698 acres) on Big Creek, both in southwestern Ontario. Bachus Woods was one of the few remaining large woodlands in southern Ontario, and included several Carolinian species, which made it a botanically significant forest. White's Bush was identified as the "finest continuous stretch of southern hardwoods forest in Ontario east of Rondeau Park". It contains a great variety of plants and animals (including rarities). Springwater Pond, on the west side, provides excellent biological habitat as well as significant recreational opportunities. Many of the trees in this forest are over 200 years of age and large in size. Species include beech, oak, tulip tree, hickory,

*(Continued on page 24)*





**White's bush on Catfish Creek as it looked in 1950. This is one of the finest stands of climax forest in Ontario; some of the pines reach more than 125 feet in height and were mature trees when European explorers first came to the province.**



**One of the earliest tree-planting machines used in Ontario is shown in operation on the lands of the Moira River Conservation Authority in the 1950s.**

cottonwood and pine. The forest is also home to significant lesser plants including flowering dogwood and sassafras.

The Conservation Branch of the Ontario Government, as well as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, recommended acquisition of White's Bush in 1951 and 1955 respectively. The owner, Fred White, died before the land could be acquired by the local authority. In order to ensure that it remained with the authority the government provided a generous grant equal to the value of the standing timber. A long term agreement between the authority and the province allocated management of 93 acres to the authority and the remaining 276 acres to the Ontario Department of Lands and Forest under a long term agreement.

In 1949 the Grand River Conservation Commission applied to the provincial and federal governments for financial assistance (37.5 per cent from each) to build the Conestoga Dam. Both levels of government agreed to fund the project, but the federal government requested that the agreement include other projects such as reforestation 30 square miles of the Grand Valley over 20 years. However, this arrangement created a problem as the federal government had confused the Commission with the Grand River Authority. Eventually the Commission and the Authority developed an agreement to have the Authority be responsible for the reforestation projects, provided that the Commission did not acquire, utilize, sell or dispose of any lands without the prior approval of the Authority.

Not long after the terms of the reforestation agreement were settled it came to light that the Commission had developed plans for a large cottage subdivision on such lands. At a meeting of the two entities the Commission denied that it had entered into any such prior-approval agreement. The Authority then withdrew its support for managing the reforestation programs associated with the Commission's funding for building the dam.

In the end the Commission completed several reforestation projects on its lands, planting five million trees on the Shand, Luther Marsh and Conestoga dam lands between 1943 and 1966. The first trees planted were obtained from the Department of Lands and Forests but the Commission established its own nursery in 1956. The Commission did not receive funds from the government for its reforestation program, obtaining the money, instead, from levies on member municipalities and cottage site rentals. The Commission and the Authority amalgamated in 1966.

Early on the Authorities placed emphasis on developing partnerships with landowners to engage in conservation projects, especially reforestation. Some Authorities bought

(Continued on page 25)



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tree planting machines to plant trees on private property at cost. The trees were provided by the Department of Lands and Forests. Many millions of trees were planted through these partnerships. The Metropolitan Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority assisted in planting over 4 million trees between 1957 and 1970. It was felt that these planting projects gave a sense of accomplishment and of assisting conservation measures to land owners.

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority established its own nursery in 1957 to assist in supporting wildlife and to beautify lands ravaged by the loss of elm trees. Land owners with ten acres could obtain trees five feet in height and have them planted for a nominal fee. Up to 1970 over 37,000 trees and more than 17,000 shrubs had been planted under this program initiative.



**Tree-planting programs initiated by the conservation authorities have been so successful that several authorities have established their own nurseries to provide reliable, inexpensive stock.**



**A handsome stand of sugar maple and beech on the Humber watershed.**

## **Book Overview**

### ***Manitoulin Island – Hearsay and Recollections Volume 3 (of 5) – Tales of the Timberman and Fishermen***

**George H. Whyte**

Self Published, 2012

Pgs.: 511-627

An Overview by Sherry Hambly

George Whyte grew up in Toronto but spent many summers as a young person on Manitoulin Island with his family. As an adult he obtained an MA in history. He and his wife taught school for several years on the Island, and for a few years owned a lodge there. He is well versed in the history of the Island, through personal accounts and much research in local and near-local museums and historical centres.

Whyte provides in-depth accounts of various aspects of the lumber/timber industry of the Island from the time it began in the late 1800s through to the 1930s. He is a good writer, and his writing provides colour to the events he describes.

Topics covered include the following:

Bush Camps	Timber Camp Accidents
The Major Lumber Companies	Weather and Timbering
The Mills	Policing Timber
- Lumber	Watering the Logs
- Shingles and Shakes	Types of Timber: Squared Logs, Ties, Posts and Paving Posts
- Laths	Schooners, Brigantines, Tugs and Barges
- Pulp	The River Drive
Mills in Townships of Burpee and Mills	Timber Bags and Booms
Mill Accidents	Drift Logs
Timber Buyers	Older Schooners Become Barges
Life in the Timber Camps	The Modern Era of Timbering
Entertainment in Camp	
Newspaper Reports	

The timber/lumber industry played a large role in the local communities, especially during the winter months when men and some women left their homes to work in the logging camps. One of the appeals of his work are the descriptions of real live people and the roles they played. He also provides details on the amount of timber cut, the rates of pay for the work done, what it was like to work and live in the bush camps, along with the hazards associated with this work.

Most of the products they produced were shipped to various ports in the States, particularly Michigan and Illinois, as well as to some ports in Ontario. The amount of timber removed was huge. He describes monstrously large booms of logs being towed across Lake Huron.

The book is filled with many photographs that illustrate the activities and events that he describes.

At the end of this volume are a few pages on the history of fishing related to the Island. There was at one time a commercial fishing industry associated with the Island, which is now non-existent. The section on the history of fishing is not nearly as extensive as that on forestry.

This is a great book to read to get a sense of what it was like to live and work in small communities associated with the timber/lumber industry, the products produced and how the products were sold and transported to their destination. This history is brought to life through personal accounts of local involvement in these industries.

### **The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River**

**Susan M. Hill**

University of Manitoba Press, 2017

307 pages

Reviewed by John Bacher

Susan M. Hill's monumental *The Clay We Are Made Of* represents a seismic long overdue correction of the bad settler-colonial mythology that still shapes both popular and academic understandings of Canadian history. Hill explains novelly how the Haudenosaunee Confederacy government actually functioned for almost a century and a half. This was during the period following the arrival of the Six Nations in the Grand River valley in 1783 and the destructive withdrawal of legal recognition of it by Canadian authorities in 1924.

Hill properly puts the Confederacy government history in the context of "polishing the Covenant Chain" as "laid out in the Treaty agreements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." Her book was well influenced by a number of "trusted teachers and advisors". Especially important among these were "Carol and the late Norman Jacobs."

With my close friend Danny Beaton, a Mohawk of the Turtle Clan, I was able to work with the Jacobs, along with other Haudenosaunee leaders, notably Onondaga Chief Arni General. Beaton and I collaborated with these wise elders in a number of environmental struggles. These included keeping a toxic waste dump out of a swamp forest near Cayuga, Ontario, and the defense of Hamilton's Red Hill valley.

What is unique about *The Clay We Are Made Of*, is that it puts the birth of forest conservation efforts in Canada in the context of Haudenosaunee determination to defend the Grand River Territory after it was consolidated to approximately its current size in 1848. Hill credits this defense of woodlands to the Confederacy government, which had strong community support.

Hill sees scholars as not appreciating the depth of support the Confederacy had for its conservationist mission. She finds that, "In the published histories of the Six Nations community, one can find many references to the political opponents of the Confederacy Council, but it is rare to find references to the council's supporters."

In explaining how most residents of the Six Nations at Grand River supported the Confederacy government, Hill draws upon what she calls, "An unusual source" to illustrate the predominance of "council supporters in the 1880s." This is an account by the ethnographer Horatio Hale of a condolence ceremony held at the Onondaga Longhouse. Here Hale mentioned that the sacred ritual "was attended by over 200 people."

Hill points out that the Condolence Ceremony at the Onondaga Longhouse involved "active supporters of the Confederacy." They "took time out of their busy schedules-the green bean harvest would have Confederacy event." This took far more effort than was expended by the petition of the Dehorner faction in opposition to the Confederacy government.

Hale was one of the few recorded non-native observers of the heroic efforts of the Haudenosaunee government to defend its forests from plundering through manipulative sales involving alcohol and deception. Hill puts the Confederacy's controversial timber regulations in the context of deeply held cultural values.

Hill sees the Confederacy's timber regulations as arising from how the "Haudenosaunee (and other

(Continued on page 28)



(Continued from page 27)

Indigenous peoples) view" human actions that impact the natural world "in the context of responsibilities." The Confederacy government she believes understood how the "gifts of the waters and forests were intended for human consumption as long as humans maintained their natural duties of thankfulness and conservation."

Hill carefully details Confederacy timber regulations. This refutes claims of hostile politicians of the era which formed a federal parliamentary committee that these rules encouraged hunger. For instance, she explains how, "Dead or downed wood could be used by the property owner; if the larger economic picture was bleak, individuals were allowed to sell this wood outside the community as an income supplement." Green wood could be "cut in order to provide for a house or other structure", but this was limited by "the expectation that the person would only cut what was absolutely necessary."

Hill documents how the Confederacy pioneered in the development of a national park. It was called "Kanyeghen." These lands were owned by the Nation instead of being allocated to location tickets. Strict regulations were in place to regulate logging here. Hill explains how "Individuals could apply to harvest wood from national lands, but only in times of great need would they be allowed to do so for re-sale purposes."

Hill explains the duties of the Confederacy's Forest Wardens. They were "charged with the responsibility of curbing timber exploitation (by both whites and Natives)." She explains how, "The job regularly proved quite dangerous, and even life-shortening in the case of Mohawk Royaner George Henry Martin Johnson." He, she notes, "was nearly beaten to death in 1865 and shot in 1873 while working to protect the community from timber exploitation."

It is to be hoped that Hill's pioneering work will be followed up with complementary writing. Native government-led defense of forests and other ecosystems should be understood as an important aspect of Canadian history to be honored.

Dr. John Bacher (PhD) is the author of *Two Billion Trees and Counting: The Legacy of Edmund Zavitz*, Dundurn Press, 2015.

# Pines in the Sand tells the story of the Lemke family

By Gerald Tracey  
News Editor

**Douglas** – It won't hit the Best Seller's list, yet a book published by a well-known Douglas man has brought a lot of joy to members of the Lemke and Heideman families in Renfrew County and beyond.

Dave Lemkay published the book early this summer and although there were only 110 copies in the first printing, most of them have been sold to descendants of August Lemke and Ida Heideman.

It was the second time Mr. Lemkay had recorded family history in book form. The first venture included a pictorial history of the Lemke family which he put together back in 1978. About 60 copies were distributed and there are still requests for that issue.

Fast forward 40 years and while attending a funeral in MacTier, near Parry Sound, he was asked by a cousin if he had any plans to update the Lemke/Lemkay family tree.

"Driving home through Algonquin Park, on a winter evening, the decision was made," he said. "Having been active with genealogy for many years, I knew I had much of the data on hand. Then the pandemic was upon us and circumstances became convenient to spend a lot of time at the computer to create the new pathways of the next generations of family members."

He embarked on the project in 2020 and spent the next four years compiling data on all the extended family from the original 11 children born between 1886 and 1909.

"I found myself reaching out to scores of cousins directly and through various social media avenues to once again garner the pictures and news of their lives," Mr. Lemkay shared. "The challenge was to get up-to-date news, but now so much more historical information was available with early census data and actual on-line records of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. Over those four years, the book came together with the help of Shelly (Grife) Tavares who assembled all the graphics and Beverley Humphries who, as editor, fine-tuned the narrative."

The book is not a bookstore

publication, but almost all the 110 copies have been distributed to family members across Canada, in the USA, England and even Vietnam. It's possible that additional copies will need to be printed.

"The project's success has been rewarding to me as the author, with many comments from delighted relatives, many who were unaware of their larger family," he said.

He tells an interesting anecdote to illustrate that with one cousin, a registered nurse who was working night shift at the hospital meeting up with a doctor she only knew professionally. She commented on her name tag, recognizing the family name Gallagher and commented that a Reverend David Gallagher married her parents back in the 1940s. The doctor said, "he was my grandfather". Only then did they recognize that they were related as third generation descendants of August and Ida Lemke.

"Everybody is extremely pleased with it and I have missed nobody," he said. "Even pictures of fifth-generation babies born as recently as May are featured in the book that was published in June."

The original couple were August Lemke and Ida Heideman who

homesteaded on the Barron Canyon Road near Lemke Lake. While Mr. Lemkay had a good grasp of the history of the Lemke family, the in-laws, including Nienkirchens, Gallaghers, Seigels, Grossleggs and Carmichaels, the Heideman clan is vast. In earlier years he was able to get a lot of information from Geraldine Kuehl of Lake Clear who has done extensive family and historical research over the years.

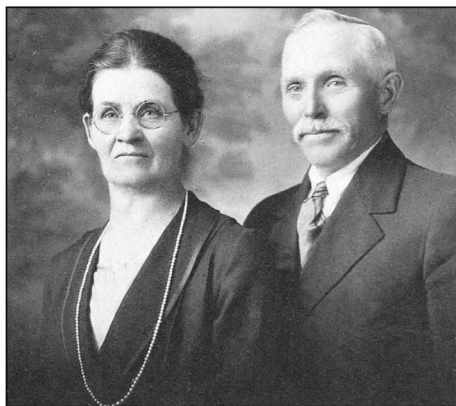
Improvements in technology also helped immensely in his research.

"Now with the internet, you can go back to Prussia back in the day, and there are baptism records, hard evidence of births and deaths, information we didn't have access to 40 years ago," he said.

Like most people who delve into researching historical information, the time passes quickly, and Dave found himself frequently working into the wee hours of the morning.

"Once I got on a roll, I couldn't quit," he admitted.

Many of the descendants of August and Ida were in the military and their stories are told in the book. There were also two or three clergymen, a couple of doctors, several nurses, a noted international photojournalist, global eco-tour organizers, railroad-



August and Ida Lemke farmed on the Barron Canyon Road.



Dave Lemkay of Douglas recently authored a book *Pines in the Sand* focusing on the descendants of August and Ida (Heideman) Lemke. The book focuses on the original 11 children born to the Lemkes between 1886 and 1909 up to the present-day generation.

ers, electricians, foresters, a wildfire behavioural specialist and an NHL hockey player, "all wonderfully interesting people."

"One fellow has been working in communications in the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) and with other cabinet ministers," he said.

The common spelling for the surname is Lemke and one of the reasons Mr. Lemkay discovered their name is spelled the way it is was to avoid oppression.

"Back in the First World War there was serious persecution against German descent people," he shared.

"They closed down the German newspaper in Pembroke, they interned Germans and other aliens at Camp Petawawa. Some of our clan at the time of the First World War decided to change it somewhat, to anglicize it – KAY, maybe make it look more Scottish or whatever."

Mr. Lemkay was born in Saskatchewan where his young father was a United Church minister. When Dave moved to Pembroke he was 20 and arrived on the scene with the different spelling. About half the family, in other parts of Canada, uses the Lemkay spelling.

He admits that it would have been simpler to change his spelling to the local version once he came to this area, but as a tribute to his late father, he chose not to.

"I've always said for 50 some years I should have changed it to KE but I got past that," he said.

The book is entitled *Pines in the Sand – Roots and Branches of the Lemke Family* because the first generation, along with the grandfather, August planted pine trees on the flats on the Barron Canyon Road back in the 1920s. The mature pines are still standing there now.

## ***In Memoriam—Ken Armson, O.C.***

**Armson** - Kenneth Avery Armson, O.C. died on December 9, 2024, age 97, at North York General Hospital following a brief illness. He was predeceased by his first wife, Harriett, in 2001 after 49 years of marriage, by his second wife, Marjorie McLeod in 2004, his sister Marion Thompson in 2019, and his son Erling in 2021. He is survived by his grandchildren, Miranda (Mitchel) and Matthew (Kate), his loving wife of 18 years, Beverley, and her most supportive family, Barbara and James Taylor, Ross and Claudia Kent and David and Nancy Kent.



Kenneth was born in Newtonbrook, Ontario, received his elementary schooling in Ontario and secondary education at the Royal Grammar School, Worcester, England. He served in the Canadian Army overseas 1945-46 as a Trooper, returning to Canada to graduate from the University of Toronto with a B.Sc. in Forestry in 1951. During a leave of absence, 1954 –1955, he attended the Department of Forestry, Oxford University and received the Diploma in Forestry for his study on the nutrition of Scots pine. In 1992 he was awarded an Honorary D.Sc. by Lakehead University and in 2016 he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada. Following a brief period with the Research Division of the

Ontario Department of Lands and Forests he joined the staff of the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto where he taught and conducted research in forest soils and silviculture from 1952 to 1978.

In 1975-1976 he undertook a review of forest management in Ontario for the Ministry of Natural Resources and his report formed the basis for forest companies entering into forest management agreements (FMA's) whereby they assumed full responsibility for planning and integrating harvesting and regeneration of the forest. From 1978 to 1989 when he retired, he served, initially as the special advisor on forest regeneration, then as Chief Forester, Executive Coordinator of Forests and finally as Provincial Forester from 1986 to 1989. A major witness in the Class Environmental Assessment of Timber Management in Ontario 1988-1992 he was active in the development of standards for sustainable forest management with the Canadian Standards Association, culminating in the first standard in 1996. Always interested in history, in 2009 he took the lead in founding the Forest History Society of Ontario becoming its first elected president. In 2010 he was elected Fellow of the Forest History Society (U.S.).

An active member of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, the Ontario Professional Foresters Association and the Ontario Forestry Association ( now Forests Canada ) he was a past president of the last two, and a longtime member of the Society of American Foresters and the Soil Science Society of America. He was the author of several books on forests and forestry and more than a hundred scientific papers and articles.

He was particularly proud to be an honorary member of the University forestry classes 5T4 and 6T0 and to take part in their class reunions.

A service will be held in the Chapel at Mount Pleasant Funeral Centre, 375 Mount Pleasant Rd, Toronto, ON. on Saturday January 11, 2025 at 2pm. Guests may arrive after 1:30pm. Reception to follow.

Donations may be sent to: Forests Canada, 15 Maple Avenue, Unit #103, Barrie ON, L4N 2N6 , The Forest History Society of Ontario (same address as Forests Canada above) or the charity of choice.



# ***Remembering Ken Armson, O.C.***

**By: Jim Farrell**

On January 11, along with close 100 others, I attended Ken Armson's service at Mount Pleasant Cemetery. For those that took dendrology at the University of Toronto, they will have vivid memories of Saturday morning field trips to the grounds to identify exotic tree species. The place does definitely look quite beautiful through a non-hungover set of eyes. Bob Fessenden assured everyone that there will be no tree test. One of the three Anglican ministers who officiated the event, Bob was a very good friend of Ken's. Unlike many services I have attended where the clergy officiating had only a passing familiarity with the guest of honour, this gentleman knew Ken very well and regaled us all with great stories of Ken's post-retirement life. Ken's granddaughter also spoke and told us stories of Ken as a loving and attentive grandfather who was up to date on all their activities and was endlessly supportive and deeply loved. Bob (former teaching colleague of Ken from the University of Toronto, former Deputy Minister of Natural Resources in Alberta and former Deputy Minister of the Premier's Council for Economic Strategy) spoke about Ken's career, drawing heavily from his autobiography. It was a fascinating and complementary mix of perspectives that described Ken well.

Attendance was like a 'who's who' of Ontario forestry with many familiar faces, albeit with a bit more mileage. It probably would have taken the best part of the afternoon to connect with everyone...it was quite an amazing gathering.

Ken's wife Beverly had been in touch with me earlier to let me know that one of her neighbours had a binder for me that Ken had assembled. I haven't been through it completely, but it looks like a very thorough collection of all of the early documentation pertaining to FHO (FHSO) going back to 2009 including agendas, minutes, correspondence, etc. These will be very helpful in filling out the records for those early years and will find a home on our website on the Board portal. Any volunteers to digitize these please get in touch.

In Ken's obituary, the family suggested a donation to FHO and/or Forests Canada be made in his memory. FHO has received just over \$1100.00 so far.

It was very nice to see so many folks I haven't seen in years...it's unfortunate that it was a funeral that brought us together.

# Forest History Ontario

## Membership Form

The mission of FHO is:

“To further the knowledge, understanding and preservation of Ontario’s forest history” and accomplish this with the following objectives:

1. To preserve forest and forest conservation history;
2. To encourage and further the development and recognition of forest history;
3. To support research and studies of forest history;
4. To support the archival preservation of records and materials relating to forest history, and
5. To promote the better understanding of forest history through public education.



### Projects of the FHO

**Catalogue of publications:** available on the website, this catalogue includes all aspects of Ontario’s forest history and members can submit contributions.

**Collections listing:** Collections and materials relating to Ontario’s forest history are identified and listed on the website. FHO works with established archives such as the Archives of Ontario and several university archives in facilitating the preservation of significant collections.

**Forestry Journal:** FHO publishes a journal available to its members, the *Forestry*, twice a year – Spring and Fall - containing informative articles on forest history in Ontario.

**Frank A. MacDougall Forest History Trust Fund:** This Fund provides financial support for projects and activities that can further the knowledge and understanding of Ontario’s forest history in all aspects. All cheques should be made out to “Forests Ontario” and noted with ‘Frank A. MacDougall Forest History Fund’

.....  
Please return this portion to the FHO with your payment to the address listed below.

Name				
Address				
City		Province		Postal Code
Phone		Email		

\*Please note that the FHO only accepts credit card through the online PayPal system. Cheque or cash only by mail- please make membership cheques payable to the Forest History Society of Ontario.

Frank A. MacDougall Trust Fund cheques should be made payable to Forests Ontario to be eligible for a charitable tax receipt.  
Charitable No. 89857 2862 RR 0001

### Payment Information:

- ☐ FHSO Annual Membership: \$50.00
- ☐ FHSO Student Membership: \$20.00
- ☐ Institution / Corporate: \$150.00

### Please make cheque payable to:

Forest History Society of Ontario  
c/o Brooke McClelland  
395 Malboeuf Crt, Milton, ON L9T7Y3

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