

Kenora, A History

A Work in Process

Last Revised at

<https://www.retson.ca/Kenora.pdf>

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My Kenora Websites

https://www.retson.ca/Kenora.pdf	History
https://www.retson.ca/KenoraCartage.pdf	Cartage and Transportation
https://www.retson.ca/KenoraCommercial.pdf	Commercial
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https://retson.ca/kenoratimeline.html	Kenora Timelines

Kenora Newsletters

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- <https://www.retson.ca/kenorahistoryandgenealogynewsletterfeb2025.pdf>
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Early Kenora

Kenora is a situated on the north shore of the Lake of the Woods. Kenora is a situated on the north shore of the Lake of the Woods situate on the Canadian Shield, more than 4 billion years ago. The metamorphic rock are from the Precambrian period more than 500 million years ago, the first part of North America to be permanently elevated above sea level. The Lake of the Woods is a remnant of Lake Agassiz. The area has been a centre of human activity for at least 8,000 years owing to an abundance of fur-bearing animals, fish and the exit to waters which ultimately lead to the arctic. The local inhabitants referred to the north end of the lake as Wauzhushk Onigum, which translates "portage to the country of the muskrat."

The City of Kenora is as old as the century dating from January 1, 2000. It was created with the amalgamation of the three constituent municipalities, the Town of Kenora (formerly known as Rat Portage), Keewatin and Jeffray Mellick.

Little is known of the Lakes first residence prior to the coming of the White Man.

When the French arrived, they found the Mosonis (or Moose People), a sub-tribe of the Cree (They lived in the Rainy Lake area up to Hudson Bay) and the Cree. The Dakota Sioux Tribes had gained control of most of what is now Minnesota and well entrenched in the Dekotas. They would conduct raids into the Lake of the Woods area. The Algonquins (including the Ojibway (Chippewa), Cree, Ottawa, Sac, Fox, Illinois, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Miami, Kickapoo, and Menominees) conducted their own raids and in the 1770 had driven out the Sioux.

According to written records first white man to visit the Lake of the Woods was Jacques De Noyon around 1688. In 1732, Pierre La Verendrye established Fort St. Charles on the North West shore of the lake. In 1736 Jean Baptiste La Verendrye, Father Aulneau and 19 others were massacred by Sioux. The Fort was abandoned in 1763.

The Hudson Bay Company, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1670 was granted a trading monopoly over the Hudson's Bay" watershed, known as Rupert's Land. From its headquarters at York Factory on Hudson Bay, it controlled the fur trade throughout much of what is northwest Canada. Undertaking early exploration, its traders and trappers forged relationships with many groups of First Nations. It had for many years been successful in securing the goodwill of the various tribes. Other than fur traders there were few visitors to the west.

Kenora Before 1836

Kenora is situated on the north shore of the Lake of the Woods. The City of Kenora is as old as the century dating from January 1, 2000. It was created with the amalgamation of the three constituent municipalities, the Town of Kenora (formerly known as Rat Portage), Keewatin and Jeffray Mellick.

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Opening the West

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1760 - 1763

150 years of French British conflict in North America ended in the Seven Years' War and the British conquest of Canada. Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Marquis de Vaudreuil surrendered New France (what is now Quebec, and other French territories in North America) to a British invasion force at Montréal by the Articles of Capitulation on 8 September 1760. New France was under military occupation and military rule until a definitive treaty of peace was negotiated. That treaty, the Treaty of Paris was signed on 10 February 1763 by France, Britain and Spain. By the terms of the treaty, Britain obtained the French possessions of Ile Royale (Cape Breton Island), Canada (Quebec), and the Great Lake Basin and the east bank of the Mississippi River. Britain received Florida from Spain. France retained fishing rights in Newfoundland and the Gulf of St Lawrence, acquired the small Gulf islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon and had her lucrative West Indian possessions, trading centres in India and slaving station on the Île de Gorée (in present-day Senegal) restored. Britain would later lose the southern North American colonies in the American Revolution. The northern colonies would become the modern country of Canada.

At the time of the Treaty of Paris, France held territory included the Great Lakes Basin and territory "running from a corner of Pennsylvania, along the Ohio River, westward, to the Bank of the River Mississippi, and northward to the southern boundary of the Merchants Adventurers of England Trading into the Hudson's Bay". The drafters of the Treaty of Paris believed that the Mississippi River flowed north to the Arctic sea and hence the western most boundary of British North America would be the center of the Mississippi River. Later in the 1880s, Ontario would lay claim to the land West of what is now Thunder Bay, stating that it had originally been part of Upper Canada which, in turn became the former province of Quebec. In Ontario's opinion, this old Treaty between France and England established Ontario's boundary due north from the western most end of the Mississippi River. As the Mississippi River has its beginning somewhere near Wadena, Minnesota, a line drawn due north from there places Ontario's western most boundary somewhere near where it lies today, about 50 kilometers west of Kenora (Rat Portage).

Royal Proclamation of 1763

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued October 7, 1763, by King George III following Great Britain's acquisition of French territory in North America. It forbade all settlement past a line drawn along the Appalachian Mountains. The Royal Proclamation continues to be of legal importance to First Nations in Canada. It eventually ensured that British culture and laws were applied in Upper Canada after 1791, which was done to attract British settlers to the province.

The Quebec Act of 1774 formally known as the British North America (Quebec) Act 1774

This Act of the Parliament of Great Britain included several components:

- The colony's territory was expanded to take over much of what is now southern Ontario, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota,
- Reference to the Protestant faith was removed from the oath of allegiance and a guarantee of the free practice of the Catholic faith,
- It restored the use of the French civil law for matters of private law except that in accordance with the English common law, it granted unlimited freedom of testation.
- It maintained English common law for matters of public law, including administrative appeals, court procedure, and criminal prosecution,
- It restored the Catholic Church's right to impose tithes.

The Treaty of Paris 1783

This treaty signed in Paris by representatives of King George III and representatives of the United States of America on September 3, 1783, ended the American Revolutionary War. Britain

acknowledged the United States to be sovereign and independent. The treaty set the boundaries between the British Empire and the new country.

Constitutional Act of 1791

Drafted by William Grenville, secretary of state for the colonies, provided for the division of colonies into two sections, Upper Canada and Lower Canada. Grenville explained Great Britain's motivations for the partition was "to reduce "dissensions and animosities" among two: "two classes of men, differing in their prejudices, and perhaps in their interests,". The act provided for an elective Assembly which could raise taxes for local expenditures. Member's of the Legislative Council, the assembly's upper house in both divisions were appointed for life

In 1821, there was a merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company

1823

In 1823 the International Boundary Commission surveyed Lake of the Woods for the US/Canada Boundary. David Thompson, Surveyor, and John Bigsby, Secretary, for the British, Joseph Delafield, Agent, and James Ferguson, Surveyor, for the US. Map rejected by the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1824 David Thompson and his son Samuel repeat survey of Lake of the Woods finding North West Angle. Map resulted in final definition of boundary. In 1825 Ludwig Tyarks, surveyor for the British, confirmed that the North West Angle is more north-westerly than Rat Portage.

1836

In 1836 Hudson's Bay Company established a post on Old Fort Island, replacing the post at the Dalles. Donald MacKenzie was appointed to take charge of the business. His son James Mackenzie succeeded him possibly around 1850 and remained there until 1858 until George McPherson took over. In the summer of 1861, the post was moved from Old Fort Island to the North East corner of Fort Street later names First Street South and Main Street South.

Between 1836 and the 1890's, the Rat Portage post was managed by several Métis individuals. From the 1890s onward there are references to Métis individuals at Rat Portage, and three more were reported to occupy dwelling houses in Rat Portage. Between 1882 and 1897, at least 11 commercial fishermen in this area were identified as Métis.

Act of Union 1840

The British North America Act, 1840 (3 & 4 Victoria, c.35), commonly known as the Act of Union 1840, is passed in July 1840 , proclaimed 10 February, 1841. It abolished the legislatures of Lower Canada and Upper Canada and established the Province of Canada to replace them.

1842

In 1842, Webster-Ashburton Treaty ratified North West Angle as the most northerly place on the US/Canada boundary and the connection due south to the 49th parallel.

Mr. R.J.N. Pither comes to this part of the country in a birch bark canoe.

1850

In 1850 Gold is discovered in the area. In 1857, Henry Youle Hind Expedition, sponsored by the Canadian government, passed through Lake of the Woods, searching out an emigrant route from Lake Superior to the Red River. Samuel J. Dawson was with this expedition. Palliser Expedition, sponsored by the British government, passed through Lake of the Woods, on a three-year expedition to survey the resources of western Canada to establish the suitability of the general area for settlement.

1861

In 1861, Hudson's Bay Company post opened on the mainland on what then was called Fort St. and Main, now the North East corner of Main Street South and 1 St South. Kenora.

Gold and Silver Act Ontario and Mining Act of Canada

In 1866 the government of Upper Canada introduced the Gold and Silver Act, and a Statue was passed during the last day of sitting of Upper Canada's last parliament. In the haste of the debate a royalty of 2 to 10% was agreed to for the mining industry. The Mining Act of Canada of 1869 required a 5% royalty by Mill operators. Which act applied depended on whether a particular area such as the Lake of the Woods was within the Province of Ontario or outside in the Dominion of Canada.

The Dream - Opening the West

Interest in the west increased through out the 1800s. In 1863, a group calling itself the International Financial Society (IFS) led by Edward Watkin, bought up Hudson Bay stock by offering £300 for every £100 of stock – at a time when the market price was £190. The new owners hoped for a windfall based on selling or leveraging the Company's vast land holdings. Britain promote it, but fundamentally settlement and the fur trade were at cross-purposes. In 1866, following a shareholders' revolt the Company embarked on negotiations to sell its territories, first to Britain, and then to the United Province of Canada which had no means to purchase them. Britain began to grow weary of its colonial responsibilities and was prepared to have the lands annexed to the Dominion.

Sir John A McDonald also looked to the West for expansion and settlement. The United States was settling its west and talk from time to time suggested that the states might wish to expand its borders into the North West. The New Country of Canada was interested in acquiring the Rupert's Land and forging a railway or other land corridor that would tie the Young Dominion together. The delegates from British Columbia who came to consider uniting with Canada would have been satisfied with a wagon road from the Rockies to the pacific. The conservative politicians encouraged them to ask for more. Sir John A. McDonald's offered the delegates a railway to be constructed in 10 years.

1867

On July 1 1867 the Dominion of Canada comes into existence as a result of the British North American act 1867. There are four provinces Nova Scotia New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. Ontario's boundary is believed to be near current day Thunder Bay. Current day Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northern Manitoba, Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec was then known as Rupert's Land until 1869 when it was sold to the Canadian government. After the transfer it is named the Northwestern Territory.

British North America Act 1867

Section 6: The Parts of the Province of Canada (as it exists at the passing of this Act) which formerly constituted respectively the Provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada shall be deemed to be severed, and shall form Two separated Provinces. The Part which formerly constituted the Province of Upper Canada shall constitute the Province of Ontario; and the part which formerly constituted the Province of Lower Canada shall constitute the Province of Quebec

In 1867 the British North America Act (B.N.A. Act) of 1867 established Canada as a self-governing country. Section 146 provided:

It shall be lawful for the Queen ... on address from the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and from the Houses of the respective Legislatures of the Colonies or Provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, to admit those colonies or Provinces ... into the Union, and on address from the Houses of the Parliament of Canada to admit Rupert's Land and

the North-western Territory ... into the Union, on such Terms and Conditions in each Case as are ... expressed and the Queen thinks fit to approve ...

In 1869-70 the Hudson Bay Company relinquished much of the authority it received in its original charter of 1670 to the Canadian Government in return for 3000 pounds and 15 million acres of land which was to be selected in various parts of Canada. 20 acres was selected in the Rat Portage area.

In 1868 the British Parliament passed the Rupert's Land Act, "An Act for enabling Her Majesty to accept a Surrender upon Terms of the Lands, Privileges and Rights of 'The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay' and for admitting the same into the Dominion of Canada." Rupert's land was surrendered to Great Britain in 1869, and Canada purchased it. By the terms of the Deed of Surrender, Hudson Bay received £300K in cash compensation from Canada, 1/20 of all lands to be surveyed in the Fertile Belt – an area bounded by the 49th parallel, the Rockies, the North Saskatchewan River and the Lake of the Woods/ Winnipeg River waterway and lands – or reserves – around each of its posts. Selling its land was to become its primary source of income for the next 50 years.

The Company signed the Deed of Surrender on Nov. 19, 1869. The Canadian government ratified the deal December 1st. Just days later London received word of the North West Rebellion. Jumping the gun, the Canadian government had sent an advance party of surveyors to Red River to measure up its new territory – without even notifying the Métis inhabitants. Ensuing events delayed the finalization of the Deed until the following summer. Hudson Bay delivered the executed Deed to the Colonial Office on May 7, 1870. On May 11th Canada's London representative instructed its bankers to pay the compensation to Hudson Bay which had been on deposit since November. Finally, on June 22nd, 1870, the Queen accepted the Surrender from HBC. The following day, June 23rd, an Order in Council was passed transferring Rupert's Land and the North West Territories to Canada, effective July 15th, 1870. The Manitoba Act, which had been negotiated in the winter and spring and passed by the Canadian government in May, came into effect the very same day, July 15, 1870. To put down the resurrection in the Red River Colony Canada sent an expedition of over 1200 soldiers called the Worsley Expedition. They were denied the right to cross over into the United States and had to cross the Canadian wilderness to do. In arriving in Fort Garry their mere presence ended the conflict. However, the fact that they had not been allowed to cross over the US border increased the desire for an all Canadian route to the west.

1870

Manitoba Created

On July 1 1870 the tiny Province of Manitoba is created. It is no bigger than the size of the settlements along the Red River Valley, making it the smallest province in the Confederation.

Rat Portage was regarded as part of the territories. Initially the administration of justice for the Northwestern Territory was placed under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

The Hudson's Bay Company's post at Rat Portage is but a small affair, three log houses roofed with bark and enclosed by a wooden palisading. The Company maintained thirteen men at this post, but nine of them are employed at small outlying posts in the vicinity. Mr. MacPherson, the official in charge, was most civil and obliging. He is a Scotch half-breed, a quiet, gentlemanly, elderly man, who has received a good education in Montreal. He had been for thirteen years buried alive at this post! It is not a most extraordinary thing, that men of any education can be found to stand a life like that, utterly cut off from the rest of mankind, receiving news from the outside world only once or twice a year, to all intents or purposes dead or sleeping? ... I ventured to question Mr. MacPherson on this subject, and he replied simply that he had long since ceased to feel anything of the kind; he had his little farm and his wife and family, and was quite happy and contented... Mr. MacPherson had a

few acres of wheat, barley and potatoes, some pigs and cows, and any number of mangy-looking pariah dogs. These dogs are of all sizes and colours, nasty-looking brutes, but very useful. They do all the winter work, galloping for miles over the frozen snow, dragging small sledges. (Lake of The Woods Museum Newsletter Volume 14 No 2)

They then headed down the Winnipeg River, across the south basin of Lake Winnipeg to Red River and arriving at Fort Garry in late August. Wolseley immediately began his advance on Upper Fort Garry. Riel and his followers abandoned the fort without a fight.

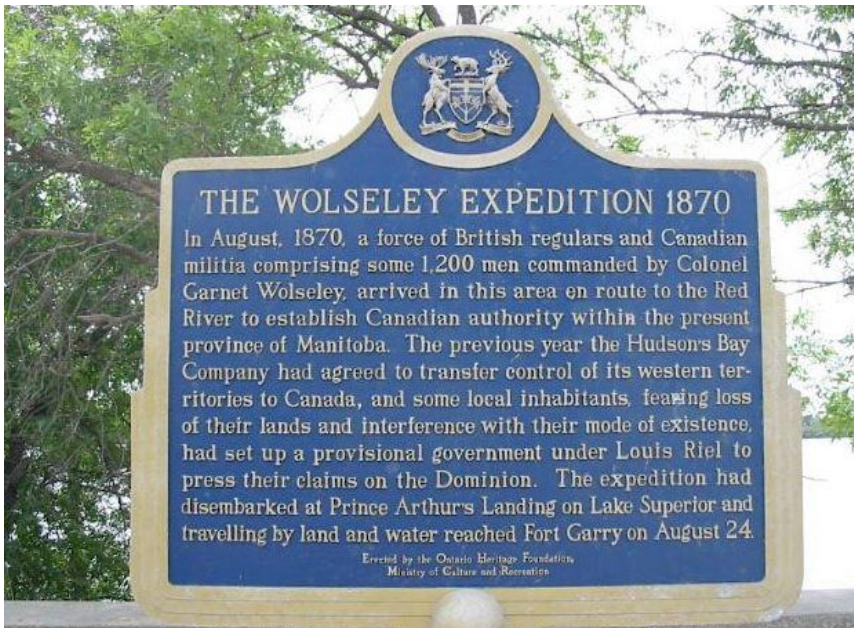
At numerous portages, corduroy roads had to be constructed. As these jobs were being done, the troops had to endure life in the bush for over two months, in summer heat and the inevitable plagues of blackflies and mosquitoes.

In 1870 Wolseley Expedition arrived at northern end of Lake of the Woods.

Colonel Garnet Wolseley left Toronto in May to put down the Riel rebellion in the west. He was refused permission by the United States government to take troops across the American border and so had to take an all Canadian route. The Dawson Road had been mapped out three years earlier but was far from complete. The expedition included over one thousand with provisions and weapons including cannons.

The expedition travelled to Georgian Bay, then by steamer across Lake Huron to the Sault Canal, across Lake Superior to the Department of Public Works station at what is today known as Thunder Bay. Wolseley named the area Prince Arthur's Landing on May 25, 1870. From Port Arthur, small boats carried the troops to Lake Shebandowan They passed through Fort Frances to Lake of the Woods.

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Negotiation of Treaties

The Indians in Manitoba in the fall of 1870 applied to the Lieutenant Governor Archibald of Manitoba and the North-West Territories to enter into a treaty with them. They were uneasy owing to the influx of settlers. Treaty 1 & 2 were negotiated and concluded on August 3, 1871. Its principle features were the relinquishment of Indian title to Her Majesty and the reserving of lands sufficient to furnish 160 acres of land to each family of five, providing for schools, prohibition of the sale of alcohol and an annuity of \$3 00 per head. Treaty 3 after protracted negotiations was signed on October 3, 1873. Treaty 3 largely covered the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in North Western Ontario.

On March 17, 1871, the resolution bringing British Columbia into Confederation was put before Parliament. It was confirmed on May 16.

Before the railway can be built multiple treaties with the natives must be negotiated. Before the railway, in 1871, Dawson Trail opens.

The Natives

With the entry of British Columbia into Confederation on the condition of the construction of a national railway, there are increased hope for future expansion of the west. Since the fur trading days had begun, fur traders had to negotiate with small bands to use water transportation system, make small payments and respect agreements made. Aboriginals exerted jurisdiction over the land and played an important role in the fur trade from which they benefited. They wouldn't necessarily benefit from the railway. The conservatives under Sir John A. MacDonald passed the first Indian Act in 1876. Indian Reserves were begun to be set up and treaties negotiated in haste. The government believed that Natives had surrendered their rights over the land and hence the government could grant rights of way to the Canadian Pacific Railway and sell lands to immigrants who were prepared to farm in the west. The natives did not have the similar view. The construction of the railway was to have considerable economic impact for Rat Portage. and the surrounding area. In 1873, Treaty #3 was signed at the North West Angle.

A Growing Town

In 1872 the first steamboat had arrived on Lake of the Woods. Mr. Frank Gardner is the builder of the large passenger and towing steamboat, the "Algoma", which is now owned by Mr. John Gardner, the senior member of the JOHN GARDNER & CO. The members of the firm are John, Frank and William Gardner. Frank Gardner started his business in Keewatin in 1876, but moved his business to Rat Portage in 1879. He later self acknowledges himself as the first permanent white settler in the area. In 1877, Joseph Derry, George Derry, Charles McMurdie, Frank Moore, arrive in Rat Portage. William Heaney and F.T. Hooper arrive.

1877

Township of Keewatin was founded in 1877.

In what Province is Rat Portage?

The Government of Manitoba believed that the Federal Government would eventually enlarge her borders to include parts of the Northwestern Territory. The first such request was made on April 24,

1873, when the Conservative Government of Manitoba sent several members of her cabinet to Ottawa to press for an enlarged boundary from the federal conservatives. If Manitoba's request had been granted the province would have been enlarged to nearly 300,000 sq. miles, with ports on both Hudson's Bay and Lake Superior.

In 1875, R. Fuller, a Hamilton Lumberman was granted a Lake of the Woods timber lease by the Dominion.

On April 12, 1876, prior to being voted out of office, the MacDonald Government passed "An Act respecting the North-West Territories to create a separate territory out of part thereof" (39 V, c21) [known locally as The Keewatin Act] The Act created, within the North-West Territories, an area the size of Manitoba's request (basically all of northern Manitoba and Ontario today). The Act stated that the land

shall be and is hereby set apart as a separate district of the said North-West Territories by the name of the District of Keewatin [and that] the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, or the person acting as such, shall ex-officio be Lieutenant Governor of the said District of Keewatin ... and shall make provision for the administration of justice in the said district, and generally to make, ordain and establish all such laws, institutions and ordinances as he may deem necessary for the peace, order and good government therein.

The act, proclaimed in force on Oct 7, 1876, only weeks before MacDonald was voted out of office, made Manitoba responsible for the 300,000 square miles of land it wanted, but without title to it. Except for the prohibition of intoxicants, the laws in the District of Keewatin were basically the same as in Manitoba.

The Ontario Government also had its eye on the District of Keewatin. They entered into negotiations with the newly elected Federal Liberal Government. Ontario claimed the land, stating that it had originally been part of Upper Canada which, in turn became the former province of Quebec which Britain had acquired from France in 1759 after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. The Treaty of Paris, signed on Feb 10, 1763, ceded all French possessions in North America to the English. At the time, French held territory included the Great Lakes Basin and territory "running from a corner of Pennsylvania, along the Ohio River, westward, to the Bank of the River Mississippi, and northward to the southern boundary of the Merchants Adventurers of England Trading into the Hudson's Bay". Ontario believed this old Treaty between France and England established Ontario's boundary somewhere west of the Lake of the Woods. Ontario's interpretation of the Treaty was that her boundary lay due north from the western most end of the Mississippi River. As the Mississippi River has its beginning somewhere near Wadena, Minnesota, a line drawn due north from there places Ontario's western most boundary somewhere near where it lies today, about 50 kilometers west of Rat Portage.

The Federal Government, under John A. MacDonald, believed the Treaty established that Ontario's western most boundary lay along a line drawn due north from where the Ohio River (traveling westward) meets the banks of the Mississippi River. As these two rivers meet near Cairo, Illinois, a line drawn due north from there places Ontario's most westerly boundary somewhere near the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William (currently the City of Thunder Bay). MacDonald's claim that the Ontario boundary lay near Thunder Bay was based on an 1817 court decision stemming from the trial of Charles de Reinhardt who was accused of a murder near the Dalles, a narrowing of the Winnipeg River about 19 kilometers north of Rat Portage. De Reinhardt was tried in the Criminal Court of Lower Canada (now Quebec) because it was thought that the Lake of the Woods region lay in "Indian Territory" beyond the edge of Upper Canada (now Ontario). De Reinhardt's lawyer argued that the Court had no jurisdiction in the case because the Lake of the Woods was actually part of Upper Canada. After listening to historical arguments about the frontier boundaries of Canada, Chief Justice

Jonathan Sewell ruled that the western boundary of Upper Canada (Ontario) ended between Port Arthur and Fort William and that de Reinhardt was properly tried in Lower Canada.

John A. MacDonalD is voted out of office a few months later. The new Liberal Government under Alexander MacKenzie declined to grant Manitoba's request.

When Alexander MacKenzie came to power, he appointed a Board of Arbitrators to settle the Ontario western boundary. MacKenzie, being openly sympathetic to Ontario's claim to the area, chose a Board that did not contain a single representative from either Manitoba or the District of Keewatin. On August 3, 1878, the Board ruled that Ontario's boundary lay somewhere west of Rat Portage (now Kenora).

Shortly after the Board's decision was released, Alexander MacKenzie's Liberal Government was voted out of office and John A. MacDonalD's Conservative Party was returned to power. When asked to ratify the Board's decision, MacDonalD refused to ratify the Board's decision indicating the Board had shown an "utter disregard to the interests of the Dominion as a whole [in their decision]".

Notwithstanding that the land had not been granted to Ontario, the Ontario Government passed an "Act Respecting the Administration of Justice in the Northerly and Westerly parts of Ontario", declaring that it was "of the highest importance ... to secure the peace, order and good government of the area". Ontario would not appoint any provincial constables in the area for another three years but did complain to the Federal Government that "lawlessness abounded in the area".

While the Federal Government refused to recognize Ontario's claim, effectively voiding their Act. In May 1880, the Conservative Party pass an "Act for the Administration of Criminal Justice [in the Disputed Territory]" (43V, c36). The Act provided that persons arrested in the Disputed Territory could be tried and punished under the laws of either Ontario, Manitoba or the District of Keewatin, however the Act was only to remain in force until the end of the next Session of Parliament and no longer. In providing an automatic expiry date, it was presumed that a decision respecting the boundary question would be resolved in that time.

1876 The Indian Act

In 1878 in Rat Portage lots had been surveyed by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Keewatin Mills and Rat Portage

In February 1879, John Mather blazed on a tree the future site of Keewatin Mills. The same year a post office is established in Keewatin Mills with John Mather as Post Master and Frank Gardner as Deputy. John Mather, who had applied for post office seals, switched seals and kept "Keewatin Mills" for the western railway stop and sent "Rat Portage" to the eastern stop. The first sawmill operation began at Keewatin Mills, owned by John Mather. A cut is made from Portage Bay to Winnipeg River for the sawmill. The sawmill owned by John Mather promises a great future for Keewatin Mills. Rat Portage has a more uncertain future.

Rideout House, is built in 1879, is located on the West side of Main Street. The fire Hall is located at the end of Second Street. The first doctor in Rat Portage, Dr. Thomas Hanson, arrives in 1879. The First library is established in Rat Portage. The Sultana vein of gold is discovered. First roundhouse with a turntable built by the CPR.

Excerpts from Pierre Berton, the National Dream, The Great Railway 1871-1881 Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited describe Rat Portage in less than glowing terms:

The one really permanent town along the half-constructed line and by far the largest was Rat Portage on Lake of the Woods. With true chamber of commerce fervour, it called itself "The Future Sarasota of America". A less subjective description was provided by a correspondent of the Winnipeg Times in the summer of 1880:

"For some time now, the railway works in the vicinity of Rat Portage have been besieged by a lot of scoundrels whose only avocation seems to be gambling and trading in illicit whiskey and the state of degradation was, if anything, intensified by the appearance, in the wake of these blacklegs, of a number of the demi-monde with whom these numerous desperadoes held high carnival at all hours of the day or night"

The town itself, in the words of another observer, seemed to have been "laid out on designs made by a colony of muskrats." Shanties and tents were built or pitched wherever the owners fancied and without reference to streets or roadways. As a result, the streets were run between the houses as an afterthought so that there was nothing resembling a straight thoroughfare in town "but simply a lot of crooked, winding trails that appeared to go nowhere in particular, but to aimlessly wander about in and out of shanties, tents and clumps of brush in such a confused and irregular manner as was extremely difficult for the stranger to find his way from one given point to another, even though they might not be over 150 yards apart."

Rat Portage, with a floating population sometimes bordering on three thousand, was headquarters for Section B – the famous Contract Forty-two under the control of Manning, Shields, MacDonald and Company. The expense of the administration was borne by the contractors, who built the jail and organized the police force. All fines, however, went to the government. Between April and November of 1880, six thousand dollars was collected in fines. The convictions - highway robbery, larceny, burglary, assault, selling illicit whiskey, and prostitution - give a fair picture of Rat Portage as a frontier town. With both the contractors and government in the law business, a state of near anarchy prevailed. At one point the company constable, a man named O'Keefe, seized four barrels of illicit liquor but instead of destroying it took it back to his rooms and proceeded to treat his many friends. He was hauled before the stipendiary magistrate who fined him for having intoxicating liquor in his possession. O'Keefe paid the fine and then as soon as the magistrate left the bench arrested him for having liquor in his possession, an act he was perfectly entitled to perform since he was himself a policeman. When he popped the protesting magistrate in jail and when that official asked for an immediate hearing O'Keefe denied it to him, declaring that he meant to keep him behind bars for twenty-four hours because the magistrate "had treated him like a dog and now it was his turn" With the only magistrate in jail, another had to be appointed to act in his place; when this was done the hearing was held and the new magistrate fined the old magistrate one hundred dollars. In the end the local government remitted both fines. (Pages 295-6) ...

[In] 1880 it was the roughest town in Canada, the headquarters of the illegal liquor industry with eight hundred gallons pouring into town every month, hidden in oatmeal and bean sacks as disguised as barrels of coal oil. It was figured that there was a whisky peddler for every thirty residents, so profitable was the business. "Forty-Rods" – so called because it was claimed it could fell a man at that distance – sold for the same price as champagne in Winnipeg from illegal saloons operating on the islands that speckled the Lake of the Woods.

Here on a smaller and more primitive scale was foreshadowed all the anarchy of a later prohibition period in the United States - the same gun-toting mobsters, corrupt officials, and harassed police. One bloody incident in the summer of 1880, involving two whiskey traders named Dan Harrington and Jim Mitchell, had all the elements of a western gun battle. Harrington and Mitchell had in 1878 worked on a steam drift for Joseph Whitehead, but they soon abandoned that toil for the more lucrative trade. In the winter of 1879-80, a warrant was issued for their arrest at Cross Lake, but when the constable tried to serve it, the two beat him brutally and escaped to Rat Portage where the stipendiary magistrate, F.W. Bent was in their pay. The two men gave themselves up to

Bent who fined them a token fifty dollars and then gave them a written discharge to prevent further interference from officials at Cross Lake. The magistrate also returned to Harrington a revolver that had been confiscated.

[Harrington was shot in a gun battle with a Company constable within a week and Magistrate Bent was removed within another week and the Winnipeg Times reported] "he is now actively engaged in the illicit traffic of selling crooked whisky himself. He has now become an active ally [with] those whom he was at one time to be at variance in a legal sense, whose pernicious vices he was expected to exterminate but did not."

It was these reports, seeping back to Winnipeg, that persuaded Archbishop Taches of St Boniface that the construction workers needed a permanent chaplain; after all, a third of them were French-Canadian Catholics from Manitoba. He selected for the task the most notable of all the voyageur priests, Father Albert Lacombe, a notable nomadic Oblate who had spent most of his adult life among the Cree and Blackfoot of the far West. In November 1880, Lacombe set out reluctantly for his new parish. [He arrived at Rat Portage on November 2, 1880.]

Father Lacombe was a homely man whose long silver locks never seemed to be combed; but benevolence shone from his features. He did not want to be a railway chaplain. He would much rather have stayed among his beloved Indians than have entered the Sodom of Rat Portage, but he went where his church directed. On the very first day of his new assignment, he was scandalized by the language of the navvies [men who build railways]. His first sermon, preached in a boxcar chapel, was an attack on blasphemy. "It seems to me what I have said is of a nature to bring reflection to these terrible blasphemers, who have a vile language all their own – with a dictionary and grammar which belongs to no one but them selves," confided to his diary. "This habit of theirs is -diabolical!"

But there was worse to come: two weeks after he arrived in rat Portage there was "a disorderly and scandalous ball" and all night long the sounds of drunken revelry dinned into the ears of the unworldly priest from the plains. Lacombe even tried to reason with the women who sponsored the dances. He was rewarded with jeers and insults.

"My God", he wrote in his diary, "have pity on this little village where so many crimes are committed every day". He realized that he was helpless to stop all the evil that met his eyes and so settled at last for prayer "to arrest the divine anger" ... "My God, I offer you my sufferings" ... Please send me back to my missions"

1881

In 1881. During the past year, the first newspaper in Rat Portage is printed. It is called The North Star.

The first day of the decade is January 1 1881 ([See calendar below](#)). During the past year the first newspaper in Rat Portage is printed. It is called The North Star.

Hudson Bay

In 1881 Chief Trader Alexander Matheson is at the helm of the Hudson Bay Post located on Main St. Early the next year the Company will move into another building alongside and then in 1886 will build a stone building after this building is damaged by a fire which burns down the Rideout House.

On February 15, 1881 the contract to built the Canadian Pacific Pacific finally received royal assent. The next day the canadian Pacific Railway was incorporated.

The Western line of the CPR between Rat Portage and Winnipeg was completed by 1882. The First railway station had been built in Rat Portage. The First Roman Catholic Church had been built in Rat Portage. The Eastern line of CPR from Thunder Bay completed in 1883.

On July 22, 1882, as a result of a petition to the Manitoba Government, the town of Rat Portage was incorporated under the laws of Manitoba. The incorporation of the town gave the municipality the power to raise money, through the sale of business licences, to make local improvements and hire town officials. On September 25, 1882, the Manitoba Government approved a request from the new Mayor and Town Council of Rat Portage, requesting that the provisions of the Manitoba Intoxicating Liquor Act, regarding the sale of liquor licenses, be extended to their town.

1883

In 1883 polling took place in Rat Portage to elect members to the Provincial Legislatures of both Manitoba and Ontario.

First municipal government is formed in Rat Portage and W.L. Baker is the first mayor.

In September 1883, the first school in Rat Portage opens in a 50th foot log school house on Hennepin Lane behind what in 2013 was the Salvation Army Citadel, the playground where the children played, presently in 2013 is occupied by Italian Restaurante. The School teacher was Janet Clarissa Crooks "Miss Crooks" to the students, until she marries Mr. Pirrie Thompson in April 1886. She is joined in the spring of 1886 by the second teacher Melvin Seegmiller who teach a total of 70 students.

The Boundary Dispute

National Dream:

The situation got more complicated when Manitoba's boundaries extended in 1881 and a dispute arose between that province and Ontario over the jurisdiction in which Rat Portage lay. Both Provinces built jails and appointed magistrates and constables; so did the federal government. For a time it was more dangerous to be a policeman than a law breaker. Since there were several sets of liquor laws, the policemen began arresting each other until both jails were full of opposing lawmen. Ontario constables were kidnapped and shipped to Winnipeg. The Manitoba jail was set on fire. Anyone who wished could become a constable, and free whisky and special pay were offered to those who dared to take the job. For a time Rat Portage witnessed the spectacle of some of its toughest characters- men who bore such nicknames as Black Jim Reddy of Montana, Charlie Bull-Pup, Boston O'Brien the Slugger, Mulligan the Hardest case- actually acting as upholders of the law, or their version of the law. The situation came to a head in 1883 when both provinces called elections on the same day and two premiers campaigned in Rat Portage with such persistence that the Premier of Manitoba actually got more votes than were registered voters. The confusion did not end until 1884 when Rat portage was officially declared to be part of Ontario.

In 1884 the Manitoba Ontario Boundary Case decided in favour of Ontario. Ottawa rules in favour of Manitoba in the Ontario Manitoba Boundaries dispute. This however would not be the last word.

Plaque Text

When the Province of Ontario was established in 1867, no defined boundary separated it from the Hudson's Bay Company lands to the north and west. Canada's acquisition of these lands in 1869 raised the issue of provincial and federal jurisdictions and the ensuing dispute was submitted to arbitration. In 1878 a decision favourable to Ontario placed the western boundary at its present location and the northern at the English and Albany Rivers. The federal government rejected the

award and in 1881 involved Manitoba by ruling that its eastern limit would be Ontario's still undetermined western boundary. The dispute was settled in 1884 when the Privy Council in Britain upheld the 1878 award.

Excerpt from <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/pageant/01/boundaries.shtml> Manitoba Historical Society:

While this settlement was largely brought about in a friendly manner there were some lively disputes over the problem as to whether Rat Portage, now Kenora, was situated in Manitoba or in Ontario. Each of the provinces proclaimed its laws in force in the district and each built a court house and a jail and appointed magistrates and constables. Rat Portage, because of the hundreds of men in the district constructing the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was a wild and wide-open town. Prisoners committed to jail by one province were released by the other; constables who made arrests were themselves arrested by constables of the other province; the Manitoba jail was stormed and burned and Manitoba's Premier Norquay, along with a force of police, travelled by special train to arrest those responsible and to bring them back to jail in Winnipeg; and when each province held an election on the same day Manitoba sent a militia force to Rat Portage to protect its polls. Before the disputed district was given by order of the Canadian Government to Ontario in 1884, Rat Portage had the most, but undoubtedly the worst, government ever known in Canada.

The first Presbyterian Church in Kenora was Knox Presbyterian Church was on the North side of First St. North, just east of Matherson St. in 1884.

Services for Anglicans begin in Rat Portage. The first church was built in 1884 across the street from the Catholic Notra Dame on 1 St. North. Rev. Arthur Stunden was the first resident Clergyman. The church burned down in 1892, and a new Church build on West side of Main Street South.

1886

In 1886, the first ocean to ocean train came through Rat Portage.

1887

in 1887 Norman threatened to withdraw from the municipality of Rat Portage, citing taxation without adequate return as the reason.

Rollerway Dam built at the western outlet to the Winnipeg River.
Norman's first school was built.

1888

In 1888, Lake of the Woods Milling Company began production of flour.
Keewatin lots were surveyed by the Keewatin Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

1889

In 1889 the Rat Portage Curling Club is formed.

In 1889, Kenora officially became part of the province of Ontario in 1889.

1890

In 1890, Rat Portage Rowing Club formed.

1891

In 1891, First Rat Portage Regatta was held. Thistles hockey team organized. Census of Canada shows Rat Portage 's population as 1,806. In 1892, Rat Portage dam and powerhouse built on eastern outlet to Winnipeg River.

The first telephone system was operated in Rat Portage by the Citizen's Telephone and Electric Light Company. Services for Anglicans begin in Rat Portage. The first church was built in 1884 across the street from the Catholic Notra Dame on 1 St. North. Rev. Arthur Stunden was the first resident Clergyman. The church burned down in 1892, and a new Church build on West side of Main Street South. In 1892 the Township of Norman was founded (Amalgamated in 1905 with Rat Portage). In 1893 Western Algoma Brick Company was established. The Local Humane Society organized. The Norman Dam was built by the Keewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing Company.

The same year Rat Portage receives a visit from Sir Wilfred Laurier.

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The Post Office

Construction of the new Post Office at 1 Main Street South is begun in 1899 and completed in 1900. Constructed of locally made bricks, the building provides a feast of architectural details that make the building, one of Kenora's finest.

1892

In 1892 the Township of Norman was founded (Amalgamated in 1905 with Rat Portage). In 1892 a boat house was built off Main St. It housed a local dance hall and the curling club.

1893

In 1893 Western Algoma Brick Company was established. The Local Humane Society organized. The Norman Dam was built by the Keewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing Company.

1894

In 1894 Jaffray is a township. It will amagamates with Melick (1902) in 1908, and amagamated into Kenora in 2000. The same year Rat Portage receives a visit from Sir Wildred Laurier.

In 1894 the local Rowing Club joined the Minnesota-Winnipeg Rowing Association. John L. Hackett was the first Rat Portage Rower to make his mark on the race circuit but was far surpassed by fellow resident Jake Gaudaur.

1895

King Edwards hotel 1895

Other Hotels included Sauerbrie House, Ottawa Hotel (The Northland), Norman Hotel

1895, The Salvation Army was organized in Rat Portage in 1895. The current building on the West side of Matheson between First St. South and Second St. South was built in 1937.

1896

The Albion House on the West Side of Matheson Street was built in 1896 and owned by Mary Anne Milligan. She was to become Mary Anne Reddy upon her marriage on October 3 1911m to Joseph Alphones Reddy.

1897

St. Mary's Residential School opened in 1897.

Royal Jubilee Hospital completed in 1897.

Victoria Rink is built in 1897.

1898

1899s

In 1899 witnesses the official opening of the second Central School.

Knox Presbyterian Church 1899



In a show of ecumenical spirit all the other Churches were closed on that day, and the clergy took part in the opening of the new Church. The Methodist had a church on "Methodist Hill" on the North West Corner of what was then called Lillie St and First St (subsequently named Third Street South and Fourth avenue South).

1900

Gun Club was founded in 1900.

In 1900 the new CPR Station and roundhouse were completed.

1901

The first year of the twentieth century began Tuesday, January 1, 1901. The song of the year was Stars and Stripes Forever.

The first week of the year witnessed a rousing reception at the Hilliard Opera House Friday, January 4th for Sergeant Harold A.C. Machin on his return from the Boer War. The Opera house was decked out in British and Canadian flags with impressive special lighting, and completely filled.

Councillors W.G. Cameron, T.R. Deacon, F. A. Hudson and A. McQuarrie, running in the municipal elections scheduled for the Monday, 3 days later occupied the platform along with current sitting Councillor James Rice, Judge Chappel, Captain David Ferguson, Lieutenant Wood and Chair by the most popular Crown prosecutor, Henry Langford. The band played *Citizens of the Queen* and struck up *God Save the Queen* when Machin entered. Oh, how great it was to be British! Queen Victoria was to die before the end of the first month ending the Victoria Era. But the future looked bright for her successor Edward V11 and her loyal British subjects in Rat Portage.

Machim entertained the audience with thrilling accounts of the Battle of Paardeburg fought February 27, 1900, Heepnek and Zaud river. He indicated that he was never so proud of "our boys" who broke from the habit of traditional European warfare, who advanced the charge, advancing by fire and manoeuvre in loose formations, making use of cover, rather than the European regulars who advanced into a storm of Mauser bullets.

The first Town council meeting of the year on January 3 was also the last meeting of the previous year's council. T.R. Deacon and Dr. A. H. Edmison did not attend the last meeting. Dr Edmison had found his one and only term as a councillor to onerous a task to juggle along with a thriving medical practice. T.R. Deacon would run again for the following year but would fail to make the cut. William McCarthy chaired the meeting. This too would be his last meeting. Nominations for the 1901 year Council had taken place on the last day of the previous year and in addition to D. C. Cameron, A.S. Horswill and A. C. Boyce had been nominated for the Mayor's position but the two declined, giving Cameron the position by acclamation. The attention of the elect rate would have to focus on the election of the town counsellors. : 13 in all let their names stand: existing Councillors W.G. Cameron, Thomas Russell Deacon, Fred A. Hudson, Alexander McQuarrie, former councillors John Brenchley, C.W. Chadwick, John Bowen Davies, A.S. Horswell and new entrants J.K. Brydon Samuel Brown, George Evans, and M.W. Sleightholm. An incredible selection -if not much diversity of views - almost all hard working, relatively successful merchants, all fairly well known "politicians", no slouches...

Many had friends in the closet City Winnipeg Manitoba.

The results of the town election held January 7th are reported in the Rat Portage Miner and Rainey River Journal on January 11, 1901, Page 1:

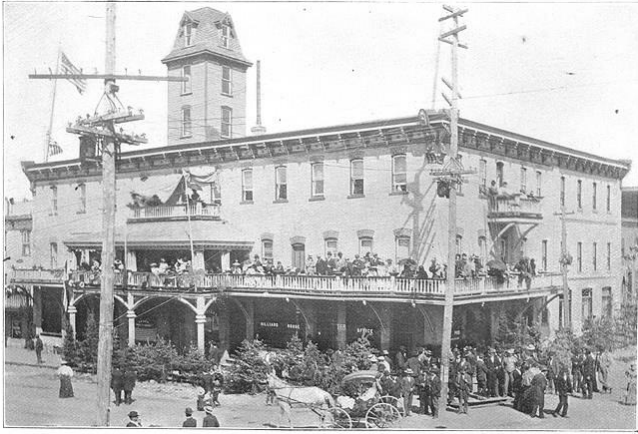
By Acclamation D. C. Cameron, successful candidates, Fred A. Hudson, J.K. Brydon, W.G. Cameron, C.W. Chadwick, C.W. Belyea, A.S. Horswell

Unsuccessful candidates: John Brenchley, Brown, John Bowen Davies, Thomas Russell Deacon, George E Evans, Alexander McQuarrie, M.W. Sleightholm

Successful candidates in Keewatin were G.H. Kelly by Acclamation, F.H. Armstrong, S. Hansen and William John Craig.

1904

On January 18, 1904, Prime Minister Laurier predicted that the 20th century belonged to Canada. That hearty mood had come to Rat Portage by the very beginning of the century. Twenty gold mines are operating with 15 miles of Rat Portage, including, Sultana, Mikado, Black Eagle and Sakoose. In 1897, \$25,000.00 of gold bullion was shipped out of Rat Portage. The abnormal wheat crop of the year contributed to a thriving railway business. Flour and lumbering mills are flourishing. The



HILLIARD HOUSE.

Hilliard House shown as it was in 1897 Destroyed by fire in January 1902
<http://www.virtualreferencelibrary.ca/> accessed on September 4, 2016

Yes, a lot of liquor was poured in Rat Portage. After all the Battle of Rat Portage had been won by those in favour of more not less outlets for liquor. Wine merchants in Rat Portage included George W Drewery, John W. Humble, William McVeigh, Thomas Walsh and Edwin R. Welsmen. McVeigh & Walsh were also the number one suppliers of Cigars. "Smoke "Grandas" Clear Havana Cigars their advertisement shouted from the local newspaper. Prices for boxes 50 cigars sold for \$3.00 to \$5.50. Tom Larkin ran a barbershop and Cigar store for part of 1901.

The local Newspaper

The local newspaper the Rat Portage Miner and Rainey River Journal sold for 5 cents and a subscription could be purchased for \$2.00 for a year, \$1.00 for 6 months or \$50 for three months. On January 11, 1901, it tells the world:

What Rat Portage Wants

Continued Prosperity

Increased Population

A few more enterprising capitalist

those who are not easily discouraged

Pulp Mills and our magnificent power utilized

Our new council to get down to work

Good roads and sidewalks

Some more good mines and locations opened up

More interest in outdoor sports

Bachelors to become benedicts

Citizens patronize home merchants

The C.P.R. to run more freight trains

A few more thousands added to the Miner's subscription list

A few more orderly kids who will be better boys and stop smoking cigarettes

Freedom from epidemics

Good wages and steady work for mechanics

Enough water to float the logs down and keep the mill working day and night all summer

The band to have new uniforms, the Police ditto

Merchants to advertise in the Miner and keep this town at the head of the procession.

Early Doctors and Dentist

Four Doctors advertised their medical practices all on Main St: Dr. Chapman (over White Manahan), Drs. Edmison & Laidlaw and Dr. David. The Dentists as well located on Main: Dr. N. Schnarr Carmichael Block, D. Marshall and J. M. McFarland (Ottawa Building).

Drug Stores & Drugs

Before the regulation of advertisement of drugs, amusing advertisements appeared regularly for various remedies for various illnesses or cares.

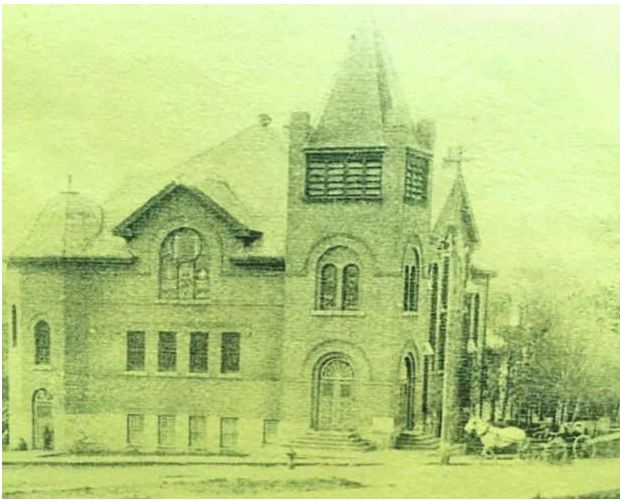
W. D. Coates had a thriving business. Wood's Drug Store, corner of Fort and Matherson Street advertised in regularly in the Rat Portage Miner. Other Drug Stores Coates and Company.

<p>English Health Salts -contains the natural aperient constituents of Ripe Fruit in a palatable effervescing powder It Cools the Blood, cures Sick Headaches, Biliousness, Heart Burns Sourness of Stomach etc. Sole Agents</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wood's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Drug Store</p> <p>Wood's Drug Store</p> <p>Cor Fort and Matherson Streets</p>	
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The Police

The Chief of Police in 1901 was Arthur Woods. His salary was fixed at a Town Council meeting in February at fixed by bylaw at \$70 per month (reported on February 8th newspaper). Other members of the force included W.P. Johnson, William Greenwood, Rupert B. Donkin and Dugald McMurphy. The average size of the force including the chief was 5.

The Fireman



FIRE HALL.

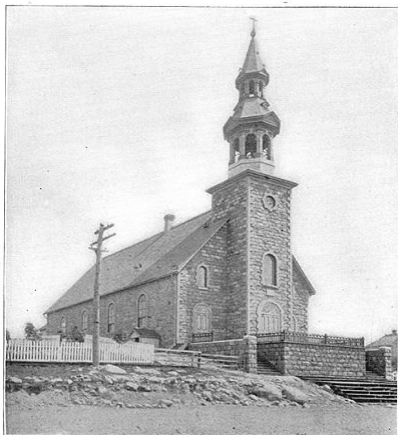
Fire Hall on Main St. (current site of the Library)

An active fire brigade was an extreme necessity in the age of primary wooden buildings and Kenora's volunteer brigade were well recognized for the performance. Chief Eager was head of the fire department for a half year in 1901. In February Constable William Greenwood also received \$100 per annum as Chief of the fire brigade and in December an additional \$25.00 for extra services. The brigade was essentially a volunteer force. Some of the biggest fire in 1901 included Cameron & Heap's big warehouse, Saturday, May 4th, Fraser Livery Stable, Wednesday May 22.

Churches

Kenora in 1901 was overtly religious and that religion was Christianity. Seldom did a month go by without a religious column such as "Living Unto the Lord, Synopsis of an Inspiring Sermon Delivered in Knox Church appearing in the local newspaper. That sermon was delivered by Rev. W. M Rochester who arrived in Rat Portage and was inducted April 1898. With his arrival, activity began which led to the purchase of land and the building of a new Church. Land is purchased at the corner of Second and Keewatin Streets (subsequently renamed Fifth Ave South), the cornerstone laid on September 15, 1898, and the new Church is formally opened April 23, 1899.

Others impressive structures included the Roman Catholic Church on Second Street North and St Alban's Church of England on Main Street.



R.C. CHURCH.



SWEDISH LUTHERAN CHURCH.



ST. ALBANS, CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Baptist had two churches in 1901. The first Baptist Church located at the corner of Railway St and Fourth Ave S. (subsequent location of Notra Dame- Keewatin - Copperfin -Credit Union.) was opened in 1898. This building was torn down in 1955 and a new Church on 2nd Street S. between Fourth and Fifth Ave. South was opened. Then other Baptist Church was known as the First Scandinavian Baptist Church (Subsequently renamed The Lakeside Baptist Church).

the Lutheran Church on 6th Street South and 3rd Ave South (Modern Street Names) supported by a relatively large Swedish immigrant population

many who worked in the saw mill (later to be occupied by the Recreation Centre). Nearly all services were conducted in Swedish. What subsequently became known as "Lakeside" was then called "Swedetown".

The Christian Science Society held services Sunday Morning at 613 Second St. S. and a Wednesday Night meeting.

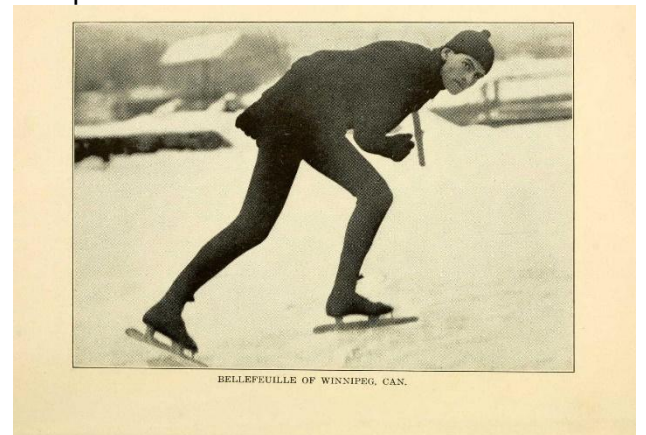
Speed Skating Champion

On February 27 Gabriel Bellefeuille is greeted at the local train station by a crowd of admirers who were there to receive the one mile champion of America which he had recently won in Montreal. The trip to Montreal had cost him \$400 which he paid at his own expense. His father Gabriel is a lumberman at Ash Rapids.

Census and New Residences

March 31, 1901, is fixed for the date for the 1901 Census of Canada. Work begins in earnest. Ultimately the population is reported for Rat Portage as 5,202.

The Kendall House located at 127 Fifth Avenue was built. The house, a solid brick structure, symmetrically designed with twin canted bay windows, centred



BELLEFEUILLE OF WINNIPEG, CAN.

entrance, porch and upper dormers boast 10 foot ceilings on the first floor and 9 foot ceilings on the second.

Board of Trade Annual Meeting

On April 1, the Board of Trade meets for their annual meeting. E Charles Edgar Neads is elected President and Jacob Hose vice president. Council members for the coming year are George Drewery, William Margach, D.C. Cameron, Frank Gardner, W.A. Weir, John Dean, J.E. Rice and M. Kyle. A lengthy report of the last years President is reported on April 2nd newspaper.

Rowing

Gaudaur began his rowing career while living in Orillia, training with world champion Ned Hanlan from Toronto. He won his first race by the age of 17 in 1875 and by 1886 was recognized as one of the best scullers in North America. In 1896 he won the world singles championship on the Thames River in England. In 1897 he moved to Rat Portage in 1897 where he joined the Rat Portage Rowing Club. He became the proprietor of the very successful Russell House.

The local newspaper on April 19th reported that, contrary to rumors in newspapers in Toronto and Winnipeg, Jake would remain a Rat Portage resident. Gaudaur was a successful business man in Rat Portage and shared the citizens optimism for the bright future of Rat Portage. On his return from a hunting trip, he issued a challenge which he sent to the Winnipeg Free Press:

Rat Portage, Ont.
April 22

To give all aspirants for the title of Champion Oarsman of the World an opportunity to make a race with me, I hereby agree to row any man in the world for the championship and a side bet \$2500.00 a side, the race to be three miles with a turn and to take place at Rat Portage between the 15th and 20th of August of the present year. As an evidence of good faith upon my part I have to day deposited \$500.00 with the Imperial Bank here and anyone wishing to make a match can cover this amount, when preliminaries will be arranged. Any oarsman will be welcomed, but Towns or Rumor, who have done considerable talking, are preferred. Date of Race must be fixed before June 1st.

(sgd.) J.G. GAUDAUR

On May 31 Town puts up the 100 Pounds to cover Gaudaur's deposit. The World sculling championship were held in Rat Portage between Jake Gaudaur and Australian George Towns. Gaudaur was defended by Towns.

The First Victoria Day Holiday

May 24, 1901, is fixed as then first "Victoria Day" Holiday to honour the reigning monarch, so named in honour of Queen Victoria who passed away in January 1901.



Brydon has idea of amalgamating Keewatin and Rat Portage Aug 20. August 26 Miner reports the Keewatin Enterprise is not enthusiastic about such an amalgamation and suggests the whole idea should ceased to be discussed.

The newspaper on August 20 indicates that the floating bridge is unsafe due to tons of Logs and drift wood washed up against structure.

Aug 23 three CPR Rail riders given a 10 day head start to leave town.



JUBILEE DAY—PROCESSION PASSING DOWN MAIN STREET.

Citizens Band conductor leaves town

Nov 8 newspaper report on Nov 5 Orange man Celebration

November 5 Perrault & Larkin announce the have leased the Davidson Barbershop & Cigar Store and they will close their other store.

Nov 15 editorial about Town and coverage of its finances by the Electric Print

Dec 10 Dr Spencer leaves Rev Reddick first sermon

Dec 10 No 1 was 5 hours late this morning.

Dec 13 Loyal Orange Lodge Elections for the following year

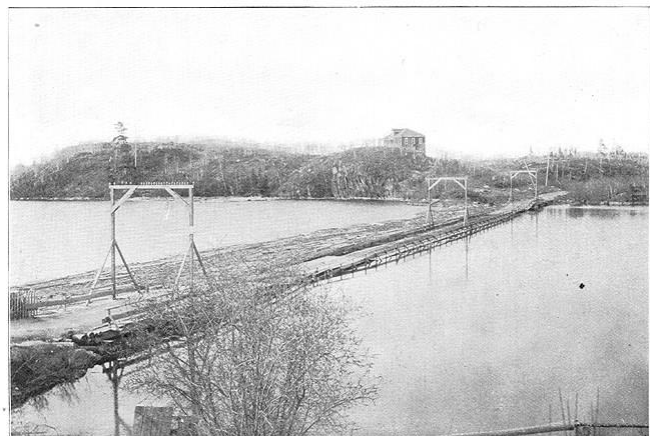
Dec 13 Council of 6 or 12 Dec 17 the results

The following individuals gave their occupation as fireman: John P. Black, Ernest Finch, E.A. French, John Gardium, John P. Gibson, John J. Green, John O'Neill, Robert Phillips, Arthur Whitaker Harry Williams,

1911

The first year of the second decade of the twentieth century began January 1 1911 (See Calender below).

The number one song for the year was Some These Days by Sophie Tucker. The optimistic spirit that herald the first decade was much dampened. The international scene generated anxiety. The possibility of a pending war was the only thing that dampened spirits in the second decade. During the previous decade Kenora had suffered from various fires in which the two principal hotels and other buildings were destroyed on the Main Street. Business from Railway construction and survey parties was much diminished.



FLOATING BRIDGE—HOSPITAL IN DISTANCE.

and

of

not

His honour Chapple T W Chapple delivers "An Excellent Address to the Canadian Club which is printed in the Kenora Minor and News over January 7 and Newspapers.

To address the Canadian Club, he chooses to address the virtues and ideals of our history: "Canadian Loyalty". He commences by reminding the club that we have no patron saint on whose day we can celebrate our loyalty but rather we have Dominion Days and Empire Days and at any meeting may say in the words of Pauline Johnson,

"We first saw light in Canada the country beloved by God.
We are the pulse of Canada, its marrow and its blood
And we the men of Canada can face the world and brag,
That we were born in Canada, beneath the British Flag
The Dutch may have their Holland the Spaniard his Spain
The Yankee to the south of us must the South remain
For not a man dare lift a hand, against the men who brag
That they were born in Canada beneath the British Flag."

He quickly adds that the question of nationality does not depend on our place of birth, "If a cat were to have kittens in an oven would you call them biscuits?"

"Why should we be loyal to Canada? Because its is our home - its future and ours depends upon our loyalty. Canada only needs to be known in order to be great. To be properly appreciated abroad, a people should be familiar with its past, proud of its own history, filled with confidence of its own resources, and strengths and conscious of its our national and material development.

"Canada has been built up largely without the assistance of any other people, she owes practically everything to herself except that greatest blessing of all - peace."

Chapple goes on to express "Canada's desire and her dearest aim is peace" and "while we dread war -not a coward's fear" and that while we must do all in our power to avoid war we must also be ready for war.

The election for the town Council took place on Monday January 2 . In addition to the election of the council the elect rate voted on a bylaw to guarantee a \$50,000 bond for the Tourist Hotel company. It passed . The number voting was larger than average. The Council elected included, Mayor by acclamation Donald Hector Currie, councillors John Thomas Brett, A. Johnston, R.H. Cobb, L. Myles, Phillip H. Austin, Joseph Pattulo Earngey

Jaffray & Mellick council included Reeve J. Ritchie, W.L. MacDonald, Wm Tew, M. Burley.

1920

The Rotary Club Begins its History in Kenora

The first meeting of Kenora Rotary Club was held Tuesday, February 10, 1920, at the Tourist Hotel (later renamed the Kenricia). The club continued to meet weekly thereafter. Rotary International website officially issued on the Charter on March 1, 1920. The Rotary Club of Kenora held its charter night on Saturday March 20, 1920, when it became Club Charter number 640, District 19. (For further information on the Rotary Club see

<https://retson.ca/kenorarotary.html>

Kenora is situated on the north shore of the Lake of the Woods. The City of Kenora is as old as the century dating from January 1 2000. It was created with the amalgamation of the three constituent municipalities, the Town of Kenora (formerly known as Rat Portage), Keewatin and Jeffray Mellick.

1921

The first year of the second decade of the twentieth century began Saturday January 1 1921. The #1 song was I Ain't Got Nobody by Marion Harris

On that day a newspaper was published. In that edition the editor expressed regrets that the Independent Labour Party had raised opposition to E.R. Finch and C. R. Simpson whom had served the City negotiation with Backus. The municipal elections were held Monday January 3rd. and both Finch and Simpson were successful elected. The election results were as follows:

Alderman	Votes
John Brenchley	375
W. Taylor	343
Percy E. Langford	332
H. McKinnon	313
Charles R. Simpson	299
Ernest Richard Finch	286

Mayor George A. Toole (1921) was elected by acclamation. New alderman, Percy Langford would continue to sit as an Alderman for 4 years. Hugh McKinnon only the one term.

In Jaffray & Mellick Alphonse A. Leydier beat out A.R. Ascough 43 to 42 votes.

Also reported in the January 1st edition of the Miner & News were two other celebrations which had taken place during the past week. The previous Tuesday's dinner of the Rotary Club was attended by 130 Rotarian and their guests at the Tourist Hotel. The Club had been formed the previous February with Charter Meeting on March 20. "It was an evening of the rarest enjoyment in the history of the town" complete with the Keewatin Orchestra. A list of those who may have attended may be found [here](#). On Thursday of the previous week, the Miner & News boasted 1000 children attended as their guests at Derry's Theater where they were treated to a program of moving pictures.

Frank Bartsch tailor at 121 Main St advertised that he was charging 10% less in order to keep customers coming in.

The newspaper of Wednesday January 26 1921 reported that there had been a three minute telephone call from Ottawa to Vancouver. The three minute call which cost \$16.25 was ordered just after 5.PM and took place by 9PM. It was routed from Ottawa, Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City, San Francisco and Vancouver. "Voice could be heard distinctly at both ends. While there was an occasional rattle on the telephone, none of the conversation had to be repeated.

On Tuesday January 25 1921 the Health Board for the year was appointed to include the mayor, the Medical Health officer, H. Rideout, James Ronan and John Black.

Charles J. Sandberg of Winnipeg comes to Kenora on January 25 and 26 to raise interest in erecting a big slide on 5th Avenue South. On January 28 a Ski Club is organized in the Temperance Hall Lakeside. One of the speakers at this meeting is a former soldier from Sweden, Victor Lundmark, who spoke of the joy and excitement of the sports of ski jumps. After considerable discussion a decision is made to erect a ski slide on the North West side of Blueberry Mountain on Coney island on a lease which will last 5 years. Officers for the Club are elected as follows:

President - Victor Lundmark
Vice President - A. Oathing
Secretary - Rudolph. "Rudy" Ernest Kron
Treasurer - O Cronlund
Club Manager - H. Westin

On February 9 the local newspaper reports that the construction of the ski jump will be completed by a February 19 Tournament

1964-1968

Human Rights and Grievances

Throughout 1964 and 1965 a group called Indian-White Committee (IWC) met to address the discrimination faced by Indigenous people in Kenora. In the summer of 1965 journalist Ian Adams, wrote about such discrimination from businesses and potential employers, from waitresses and barkeepers, from media and the police. He indicated the town was racially segregated as demonstrated by three different types of laundromats in town, one for “whites”, one for “Indians” and one for “Indian women with white husbands”. In 2 pages in the local newspaper Fred Kelly explained the purpose for a conference to explain the purpose of a conference to be held toward the end of November¹. The conference would provide an opportunity for local Indigenous people to collectively express their views about how to create change by challenging racist stereotypes they experienced daily. On the evening of November 22, 1965, nearly 400 indigenous men and women, along with dozens of white supporters, gathered at the Indian Friendship Centre in Kenora. They marched, linked arm-in-arm to the local legion where the Town council was meeting. Peter Seymour and Fred Kelly addressed the council outlining the economic and social; inequities Indigenous people faced both in the town and on reserves. Using employment statistics they illustrated that out of 3000 status Indians in Kenora only 12 were employed full-time. Press across Canada coined the protest “Canada’s First Civil Rights March. In 1966, a “Mayor’s Committee was established was established at the insistence of the marchers. The committee began with a full agenda of issues: employment, housing, dialogue between whites and Natives and improving the “Image of the Indian”.

1974

Ojibway Warrior Society Occupation of Anicinabe Park

In mid July 1974 members of the Ojibway Warrior Society occupied Anicinabe Park indicating they intended to remain until it once again became “liberated Indian territory”. In an extensive interview on August 8, 1974, on week 3 of the standoff Louis Cameron indicated had decided to their action after 3 levels of government had failed to meet any of the demands from the sit in at the Indian Affairs office in Kenora seven months earlier. The group numbering some 150 were armed with an assortment of hunting rifles and homemade explosives and demanded action on a number of issues that had been discussed at least the Indian Rights march nine years earlier in 1965: housing, policing, jobs, water poisoning, violent deaths and land. (For fuller list of Ojibway Warrior Society demands see Appendix to Burton’s Journal of a Country Lawyer)237-139

2000

Amalgamation leads to City of Kenora

Towns of Kenora, Keewatin and Jeffrey Mellick amalgamate effective January 1, 2000, to form City of Kenora.

¹ <http://www.kenorapubliclibrary.org/library-resources/newspaper-archives.aspx> (KMN19651029 Pages 1 &8.

2005

Abitibi permanently closes paper mills in Kenora.

On December 14, 2005, Abitibi-Consolidated announced its mills in Kenora are permanently closed after failing to reach terms on deals to keep them open. "We could not find a viable long-term solution to return the two mills to profitability," said John Weaver, the president and CEO of Abitibi. The company moved to shut down one of its two paper machines permanently and put another on indefinite idle. Subsequent talks between the company and its unions failed to reach a deal on getting the second machine restarted, leading to Wednesday's announcement. About 320 people worked at the Kenora mills when it ceased operations.

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