

Mr. George Clark's Story

Some few years ago I interviewed Mr. George Clark at the Matabanick Inn with the request of some data on the earlier days of this Township referring to him as one of our elder citizens.

With a twinkle in his eye and the remark "I am not so old yet", accompanied by a bit of step dancing, he gave me this tale.

On or about 1867, my father left Fenelon Falls to spy out the land in the area of Haliburton County. Due to the absence of roads, the trip was made travelling by canoe up the Trent and Gull River waters. After some days he arrived in Stanhope Township and taking the East Branch from Boshkung Lake up Beech and Maple Lakes he finally selected a site for his future home on the Grass River, the property on which the United Church at Maple Lake stands. Returning downstream at a much livelier rate (the current being with him), he immediately took action to finalize his plans.

A serviceable boat was procured and supplies purchased for at least a month's use, stove, cooking utensils and the necessary *addments*⁷ of household use, no T.V. of course. *(with me)*

There were six souls in the party which embarked on this expedition, Mother and Father and four children. George being seven years old at this time, not receiving any weekly allowance, but contributing to the whole effort by pulling his weight. Under such circumstances are men reared.

Much thought must be given to supplies. Medical supplies of some extent must be included and some hardware for building, nails particularly, for few stores existed north of Cobocok at this time.

At last all things being ready (or so they thought), a start was made, the adventure was afoot.

2.

Progress of necessity was very slow, some ten days being taken up on Cameron Lake alone. Several trips must be made to transport all supplies and the larder must be kept filled. Occasionally a delay of a day at some place was necessary for the baking of bread etc. Portages were a problem, all the family pitching in to do their bit on the smaller utensils and a doubling up to carry the stove and other heavier articles.

Rough weather on the larger lakes in the south added to the problems and the portages consumed a great amount of time.

Up Norland way and through the Mud Turtle Lakes (no Shadow Lake), splendid time was made, no heavy portages and the smaller lakes did not present a danger to their navigations in bad weather. At Moore's Falls a few days were spent replenishing supplies, bread being baked and other foods being prepared.

Continuing up Gull Lake, Gull River to the Big Eddy, then the long portage to Mountain Lake, a long hard trail.

Embarking on Mountain Lake the trip was continued portaging at the falls to Twelve Mile Lake and then through the Boshkungs to Beech River, - continuing up Beech River and Beech Lake their destination was drawing near, a short portage at the foot of Maple Lake. Fresh fish were caught along the route the coming from Gull, Big Boshkung and Maple Lakes. The pilgrimage ended when they arrived at Grass River. Permanent camp was set up and arrangements made for a dwelling.

The shores of the river were covered with a splendid growth of pine, cedar, spruce, etc. little trouble in selecting and cutting suitable timbers for a log house.

Chief Joe Kenises with some of his braves were camped on this site and being friendly Indians gave considerable help to the new arrivals resulting in a habitation being ready in the matter of a very few days.

Clearing operations were started at once to prepare land for the spring cropping, arrival too late for any returns the first year.

3.
As before stated the Cemetery and Maple Lake United Church are on the south west corner of this property, also a small Indians burying ground is on the north shore of the river near the east boundary of the lot.

Thus arrived and continued residence for some years one of the pioneer families of the township.