

ORILLIA

A STUDY OF THE TOWN AND ITS REGIONAL SETTING

BY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I	2
Geography of the Region and Town Site.	
a) General Description of Southern Ontario Region.	2
b) A study of Orillia and its Environs.	5
CHAPTER II	12
Historical Development of Orillia.	
CHAPTER III	17
Population, Economic and Social Organization of Orillia.	
CHAPTER IV	25
Ecological Organization of Orillia.	
CHAPTER V	28
Orillia as a Physical and Social Mechanism.	
CHAPTER VI	58
Tourism.	
CHAPTER VII	61
Orillia and its Umland.	
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.	67

TABLE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

	Page
Orillia's Position on Two Lakes	11
Orillia's Railway Terminal	30
Railroad Yards	30
Main Hospital in Orillia	36
Cultural Institution - High School Presbyterian Church	39
Recreational Land Use - Golf Course Dance Pavilion	45
Orillia's Community Centre	43
Oval Sports Ground	43
An Orillia Industry	50
Industrial Encroachment on Residential Area	50
Orillia's Main Street	53
A modern Commercial Hotel	53
First Class Housing	55
Second Class Housing	55
Apartment Building in Orillia	57
Spacious Lakeshore Home Near Orillia	57
Resort Hotel on Lakeshore Near Orillia	59
Motel Development on Highway North of Orillia	59
A Farm Near Orillia	65
Beef Cattle on Farm Near Orillia	65
Shield Exposure 10 Miles North of Orillia	65

TABLE OF MAPS

	Page
Location Map.....	3
Physiographic Map of Orillia Vicinity.....	6
Key Map.....	9
Proposed Plan of Orillia (Envelope at Back).....	
Land Use Map of Orillia (Envelope at Back).....	
Umland Map of Orillia.....	62

(1)

## INTRODUCTION

There are interrelated forces prevailing between a town and its regional setting. This study of Orillia in its local setting and its relationship to the larger area of Southern Ontario entails a discussion of the geographical aspects of both these areas. To understand the present function of the town, it was necessary to study the history of the Orillia region.

The field work was carried out during the summer and fall of 1952 and the spring of 1953. Interviews were made with a representative of the town's merchant and business men and certain older residents. Census data was procured and analyzed. Old newspapers and historical bulletins also proved invaluable for the research.

The physical make-up of the town was studied thoroughly to provide a basis for a functional classification. The ecological, social and economic organization of the town was investigated from the standpoint of statistics and in the field. Some attention is given to the tourist trade since it is one of Orillia's major industries. Rural-urban relationships have been discussed throughout the whole study and the last chapter on Orillia's umland also deals with this aspect.

## CHAPTER 1

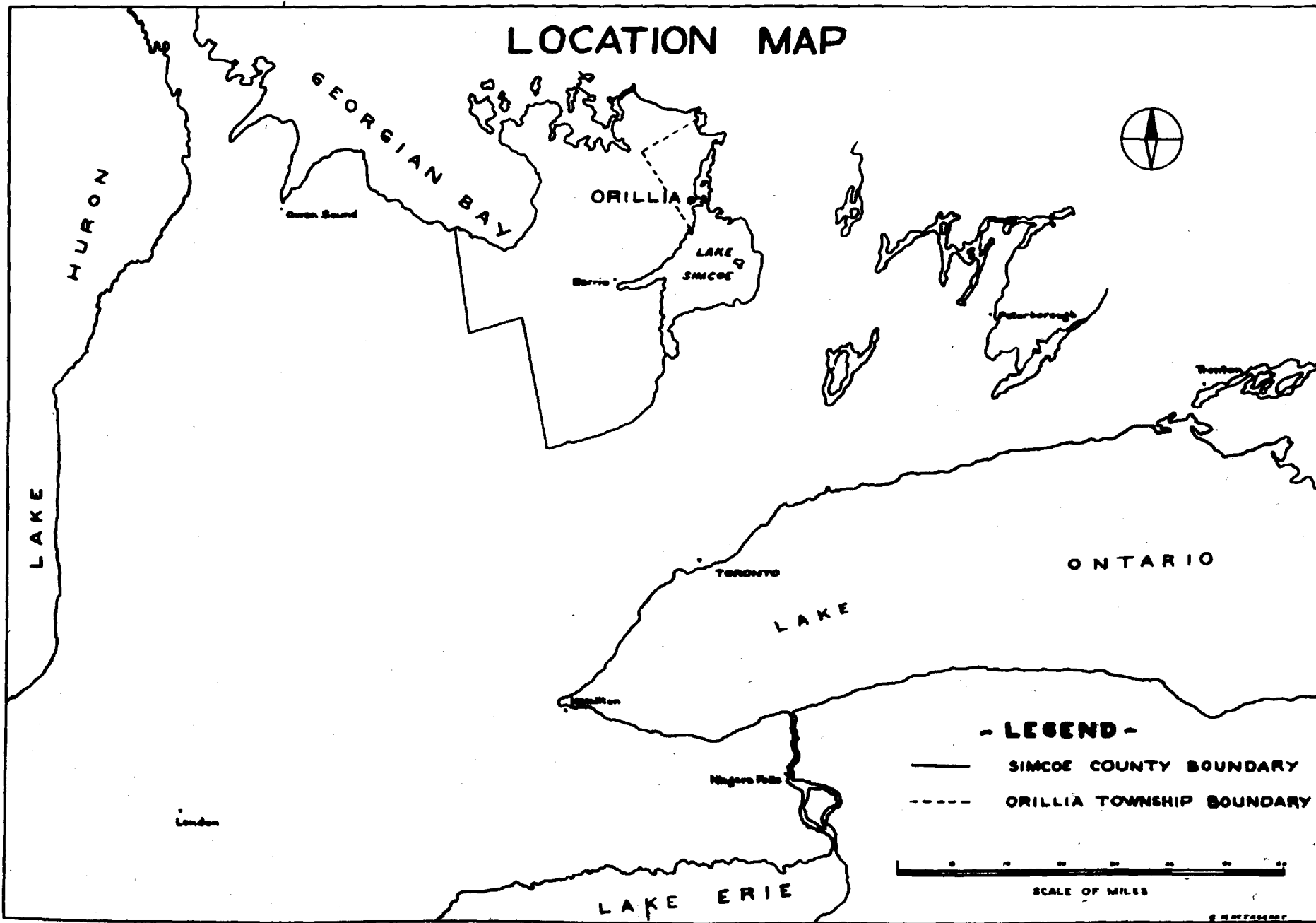
### GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION AND TOWN SITE

#### (a) General Description of Southern Ontario Region

The topographic features of Southern Ontario owe their existence to the ice sheets of Pleistocene geologic time. Since the era of Paleozoic seas at which time the different bedrock formations of Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian and Devonian were laid down, the land has been undergoing continual erosion interrupted by the glacial period. The glaciers covered the bedrock with a layer of unconsolidated material. The landforms which include drumlins, moraines, eskers and kames were formed by the action of the ice sheets and by the glacial streams and lakes. Certain depressions like the present Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe basins were flooded during the melting and damming of the ice sheet and these glacial lakes Iroquois and Algonquin left reminders of their former existence on the landscape. In a general way, Southern Ontario may be divided topographically into a northern upland area and a southern lowland area. The exposed bedrock of the Precambrian Shield comprises the former while the Paleozoic limestones, sandstones and shales overlain by glacial drift comprises the latter.

Climatically, the Southern Ontario Region lies in the cool temperature zone with six months above 43°F. It lies in the path of the Westerlies and the cyclonic storms. January is the coldest month with a mean of 20° and July is the hottest with a mean of 70°. The annual range varies from 48° in the southwest to 38° in the northeast. The growing season ranges from 172 days in the northeast to 216 days in the

# LOCATION MAP



## - LEGEND -

- SIMCOE COUNTY BOUNDARY
- - - ORILLIA TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY





southwest. The annual precipitation is 28"-40" with a uniform seasonal distribution and the heaviest fall coming in December or July. The Great Lakes have a moderating influence on the climate of their immediate surroundings and even small lakes like Lake Simcoe exercise an influence in the same manner. The soils of Southern Ontario have been developed under a humid climate and forest vegetation and the profiles formed under these conditions have been the Brown Podzols and Grey-Brown Podzols. The original forest cover has been practically cleared except for the greater part of the Shield on which the Brown Podzols have developed. Forests of mixed conifers and deciduous trees are now prevalent and a small amount of mixed farming is carried on in local areas on the relatively infertile soils of the Shield. The Grey-Brown Podzols constitute the remainder of this region's soils and little forest is found as most of the land has been cleared for mixed farming purposes. The loams and clay loams formed on the till plains are the best examples of the Grey-Brown Podzols and constitute the best farming land. Soil erosion and water control have created local problems.

Southern Ontario is almost completely surrounded by navigable rivers and lakes and no part of it is more than 100 miles from a port. The waterways have been linked up by canals providing through transportation for the needs of the region itself and also for the rest of the Dominion. The Trent, Rideau and St. Lawrence canals handle only local traffic but the Great Lakes Waterway System gives this region a strategic location for goods flowing east and west across the Dominion and the United States.

This region of Canada is concerned primarily with manufacturing and agriculture with minor importance attached to the tourist trade, the development of hydro electric power, fisheries and mining. Climate, soils and topography have been economically favourable to agriculture

since settlement began. Manufacturing has had its greatest development in this area because of the available hydro, proximity to raw materials, high population density, a ready market and a highly developed transportation system.

(b) A Study of Orillia and Its Environs

The site of Orillia is well suited to an urban development because of its unlimited possibilities for expansion except to the east where the lake provides a barrier but adds beauty to the site. The town lies centrally in the Southern Ontario region and is only 80 miles from the great metropolitan centre of Toronto. The site and its surrounding area ranges in elevation from the Lake Simcoe altitude of 718' O.D. to about 1200 feet in the morainic hills to the southwest of Orillia. The area is relatively flat with poor drainage as most of this section was under glacial Lake Algonquin in which was laid down the sand and clay plains and marshy tracts seen on the physiographic map. The present classification of Simcoe lowlands constitutes these sand and clay plains and till plains while the Simcoe uplands are the same moraines which were islands in Lake Algonquin. Old shore forms such as shore-cliffs, bouldery terraces and beaches give evidence of this former large lake. The sandy beaches particularly in the western shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe have been developed as cottage sites. Just to the north of Orillia comes the boundary of the Canadian Shield and the end of arable country. This land is better suited to forestry, mining and recreation and in the development of electric power. Limestone outcrops appear on the edge of the Shield which are being quarried



for building, mining and road construction purposes.

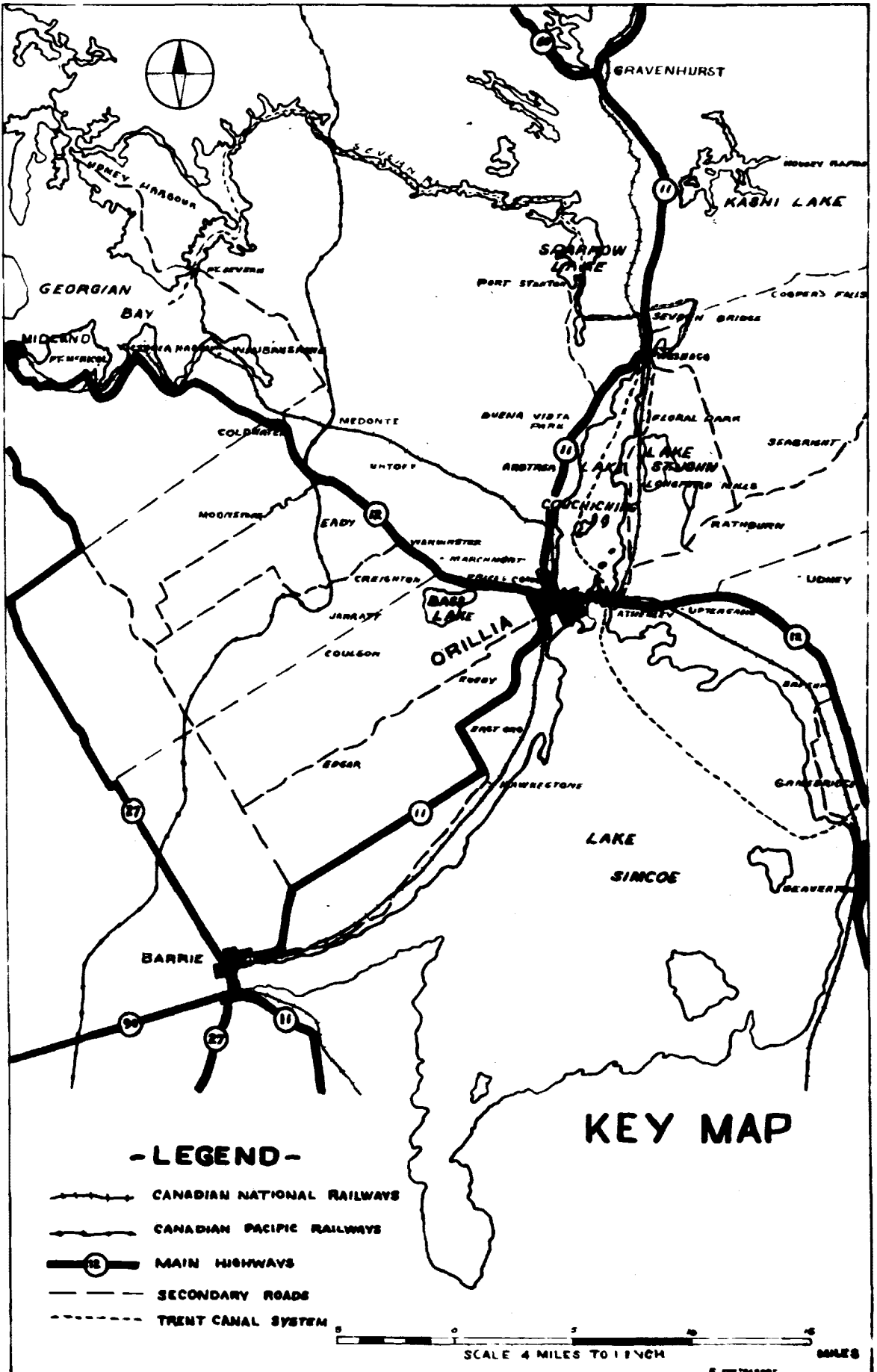
Orillia is included in the Simcoe and Kawartha Lakes climatic classification of Southern Ontario. This area has a mean annual temperature of 42°-44°, a winter temperature of 17°-19° and a summer temperature of 65°-67°. The mean high at Orillia is 55° and has a mean low of 32.5°. The lowest temperature recorded at Orillia was 32° below and the highest was 94°. The growing season lasts from April 18 to October 25. The annual rainfall at Orillia is about 26.6" with a yearly snowfall of 52". Much of this climatic zone falls in the "rain shadow" area of the western uplands but the rainfall maximum occurs in the growing season. The Great Lakes have a modifying influence on the temperature of the Orillia area while the waters of Lake Simcoe have a degree of moderating influence on its bordering areas.

In the main, the soils of the area are well-drained but with imperfectly drained clay and sand plains and marshes occurring in relatively small areas. This is the transition zone between Brown Podzols and Grey-Brown Podzols and while some of them still retain characteristics of a Grey-Brown profile they are gradually becoming Brown Podzols. Loams and sandy loams are found near and to the west of Orillia and these soils constitute the best farmlands for the production of hay, oats and livestock. The clay soils to the east of Orillia and the two lakes support a mediocre type of general farming. The soils of the Shield are too thin for successful farming. Thus its location on the edge of the Shield places a severe limitation on the agricultural development of its northern hinterland area. This land is in the general farming belt of Southern Ontario with a slight specialization on dairy farming. The soils are low in lime content and farmers have noticed changes in crop yields in the last six






years. Some speculation has been going on as regards to the introduction of a tobacco culture on the sandy loam areas to the west of Orillia. This might be the remedy for the declining agricultural economy of the area. Also market gardening is having a favourable growth on the sandy soils on the outskirts of Orillia.

The bodies of water in the Orillia vicinity serve not only as cottage sites but also are obstacles to urban growth. The rivers which have an indirect bearing on the economy of Orillia are relatively far removed from the area but merit discussion. The whole of the Lake Simcoe basin which includes an area of 2000 square miles is drained by the Severn river into Georgian Bay. The river is also a segment of the Trent Waterway as well as being used as sites for cottage dwellers and the location of Orillias first municipally owned hydro electric power station. The other rivers are less significant and they are found further up in the Shield. Muskoka and Gull rivers have been harnessed to supply hydro to the municipality of Orillia and it is remarkable that not only is she able to supply her own needs but also has a surplus to market to the Ontario Hydro in times of emergency.

The lakes of the area provide locations for cottage development and public bathing and recreation. Lake Simcoe with an area of 284 square miles is the largest lake of Southern Ontario and not only is it used for cottage sites for the people from Orillia and Toronto but it is also a vital link in the Trent Waterway System which is used by medium sized pleasure craft. The intake water pipe line extends far out into Lake Couchiching and supplies the residents of Orillia with their drinking water throughout the year. Its shores are crowded with cottages, Y.M.C.A. and athletic camps, resort hotels, public bathing facilities and summer



**- LEGEND -**

-  CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
-  CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAYS
-  MAIN HIGHWAYS
-  SECONDARY ROADS
-  TRENT CANAL SYSTEM

**KEY MAP**

0 5 10 15  
 SCALE 4 MILES TO 1 INCH  
 MILES

communities such as Floral and <sup>4</sup>Brena Vista parks. In addition to these institutional facilities and public grounds, there are a number of private permanent dwellings along the shore. This lake provides the only physical barrier to further expansion of the town. It is part of the Trent System as is Sparrow Lake which has many resort hotels on its shores. The smaller lakes of Bass, St. John and Dalrymple are used to a lesser extent but are important in the summer tourist trade.

The same favourable conditions of climate, topography, soils and water for transportation and power which have made Southern Ontario a great manufacturing and agricultural region apply to a considerable degree to Orillia as well. However its location on the northern margin of the lowland is not as advantageous as is that of the more central and southern locations. It has become a medium sized manufacturing centre and strong emphasis is placed on her location as a gateway to the great summer resort areas and as the centre of a moderately prosperous farming area. Will the town continue to grow and prosper with the growth and prosperity of Southern Ontario? In all likelihood this will be the case because as the importance of Southern Ontario increases which is very much contingent on the St. Lawrence Seaway Project, the growth of metropolitan centres along Lake Ontario will expand. Middletowns such as Orillia will be the centres for decentralization of both industry and population. The importance of a town in the broader region may be seen more clearly in its development in the smaller region and the next chapter deals with the historical growth of the town of Orillia in its setting at the junction of two lakes.



ORILLIAS POSITION ON TWO LAKES



## CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ORILLIA

To describe the growth of a town and its changing functions, one must take into account also the changing functions of the surrounding region which affect the functions of the town.

Champlain had explored Huronia as early as 1615. The Hurons were wiped out by the Iroquois who in turn were driven out by the Ojibways and hence Orillia had its first beginnings as an Indian fur trading post. It remained so until it was made an Indian reserve by the government in 1828. The first white settlers arrived in 1830 and after they had taught the Indians more modern methods of farming, they petitioned to the government for their removal to a larger tract of land across the lake which is now the Rama Indian Reserve. About this time around 1838 there were twelve British and Irish peasant families and they asked the government to build a landing wharf. With the introduction of a steamer on Lake Simcoe and the opening of roads connecting it with other settlements, Orillia or Newtown as it was known then became a post of call. During the eighteenth century, the Lake Simcoe route was not used as a highway by the fur traders as they travelled by canoes on other routes like the Ottawa river but this changed in the nineteenth century with the coming of the steamship. Orillia became a supply base for the settlers to the north and west who were carrying on a mere subsistence agriculture at this time. Supplies, mail and passengers came by stage from Holland Landing during the winter freeze but with the spring thaw

they came by steamer up Lake Simcoe. A new influx of settlers swelled the population around 1841 after the effects of the Mackenzie Rebellion. A provincial lunatic asylum was built just south of the settlement in 1859 and by 1866 it had 140 patients. The staff of this hospital presumably used Orillia as a supply base for their needs. In 1862 the settlement was considered to be strategic enough for a Hudson Bay Company post and remained so for 17 years.

In 1867, the settlement was incorporated as a village and with the coming of the railways four years later further expansion was to be the keynote. The Great Northern Railway ran to the north while another line connecting Midland and Port Hope was completed in 1872. The advent of the railroad put an end to the freight business of the boats on Lake Simcoe. Meanwhile stage lines had connected the village with other centres to the west, south and east and this impetus of improved transportation facilities put the population of Orillia up to 2000 and it was incorporated as a town in 1874.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Orillia became a supply depot and market centre for the farmers and lumbermen of the surrounding area. The tourist industry made its first beginnings during the last quarter of the nineteenth century when Orillia became known as the gateway to Muskoka. Manufacturing industries made their first appearance on the Orillia scene with the establishment of a carriage factory in the 1880's. Farming began with the first settlers and they produced everything that could be utilized on the farm. Gradually as the land was cleared of forest, wheat was grown and ground at the nearest grist mill for own consumption. Later a surplus was produced but was pushed off the market by the Prairie wheat and then came the intro-

duction of beef cattle, hogs and poultry. Orillia became a marketing centre for the farmer's beef, veal, pork and poultry and also a supply centre for his needs now that subsistence farming was a thing of the past.

Lumbering was an important occupation during the latter part of the nineteenth century especially in areas where white pine stands were plentiful and one of these areas was to the north of Orillia. Three lumber mills were located in the town during the 1880's but most of them were probably located in smaller centres near the forests. Rather Orillia was a supply and service centre for the lumberjacks. Tourists were attracted to this centre because of the Couchiching Point Hotel which was the Royal Muskoka Hotel of the 1870's until it burnt in 1879 along with many other buildings as fire swept through the downtown commercial section. Vacation seekers went through Orillia on their way to the northlands and some stayed to establish commercial tourist hotels on the surrounding lakes. The advent of the motor car put even greater significance on the tourist trade and Orillia has remained a strategic supply centre for vacation hunters.

Manufacturing had its start with a carriage factory and later two tanneries were built which remained in operation until after the first World War. Manufacturing expands more after the turn of the present century and commerce is established on a larger scale after the big fire. New larger stores were constructed of more fire resistant materials and two new banks were doing a large business in the 1890's. The general stores were the big stores because there was great competition and 'merchant princes' like Mr. Mulcahy ran their businesses in such a manner as to overpower the smaller stores. The first beginnings of

municipal utilities in the form of a water works was established before 1900. Lighting and incandescent lighting both operated by steam provided the only power until after 1900.

With the turn of the century came the expansion of industries and the construction of power dams. Orillia was the <sup>4</sup>mariposa of Stephen Leacock's "Sunshine Sketches" at the turn of the century with 115 telephones in operation and 140 attending the High School. The town prides in the fact that it was the first community in North America to build a municipally-owned long distance transmission power line. This was accomplished six years before the Ontario Hydro had its first line through this territory. This power dam was completed at Ragged Rapids in 1902 and was later replaced at Swift Rapids in 1917. Another plant was completed at Minden in 1935 and still another at Mathias in 1951. These plants with their low cost power have not been a very strong factor in the location of industries because they had a start before this cheap power was available. It was rather a local affair. The residents of Orillia however have enjoyed one of the lowest rates per capita for a long time.

J.B. Tudhope and Erastus Long were the founders of manufacturing in the town and they induced their friends to come with their industries. Tudhope started some of the other factories up which are engaged in large scale production to-day. He built the first automobiles in Ontario but with the coming of the first Great War, he turned to munitions manufacture and never again returned to automobile making. Erastus Long's munitions plant was noted for its great efficiency. Along with this new industrial development, a fine community spirit was built up and this was reflected in the generous financial support for the building of a Y.M.C.A. and

the lead that the town took in the recruiting of a County Regiment for the first World War. Limestone quarries were being exploited in the Longford area in the two decades following 1900 but with the introduction of Indiana limestone which could be cut more readily, these quarries lost their significance.

Orillia has grown steadily since it was incorporated as a village back in 1867 and as the statistics will show, it took a big jump in population in the last decade. The original settlement grew very slowly until the railroad era which eventually introduced manufacturing and increased commerce and the lumber and tourist trade. Much of her wealth to-day is dependent on the great diversity of industries.

(17)

CHAPTER 3

POPULATION, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF ORILLIA

The extent of the area of settlement and the number of inhabitants gives a rough idea of the people per square mile which at the present time in Orillia is about 3000 which is normal for an urban settlement of this size. Population changes in the last eighty years appear in the accompanying table but without figures on birth and death rates and natural increase versus migration, little importance can be attached to the statistics save for an explanation of a more rapid growth in one decade than in another. Figures show a greater increase in the

POPULATION CHANGES IN ORILLIA BY DECADES (1951 CENSUS)

1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
1322	2910	4752	4907	6828	7631	8183	9170	12100

decade during and after the second World War than in any other time of the town's history. This was due to the widespread migration of displaced peoples from the war torn areas of Europe into Canada. This was a 23.6% increase from the beginning of the war to the end of a six year postwar period. From 1871 to 1911, there was a steady increase in population which was synonymous with the coming of the railway and manufacturing industries up to the start of the first World War. Of the total immigrant population of 1255 to-day 922 had their birthplace in the United Kingdom, 125 in the United States and 165 in the countries of Europe and Asia. A further breakdown appears in the accompanying figure on origin of the population. The only significant period of immigration was the aforementioned second post-war period from 1946 - 1951. One can assume that this number on the table of figures constitute

(18)

POPULATION OF ORILLIA BY BIRTHPLACE (1951 CENSUS)

Native Canadians									United States			
Total	Ontario		Other Provinces						Total			
10855	10314		561						125			
Europe and Asia									United Kingdom			
Tot.	Germ.	Italy	Pol.	Rus.	Scan.	Other	Asia	Other Nations	Total	Eng. & Wales	N.Ire.	Scot
165	13	11	43	21	12	65	25	7	922	706	47	169

the greater proportion of immigrants that were born in European countries other than the United Kingdom. These figures compare favourably with the

IMMIGRANT POPULATION OF ORILLIA BY PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION (1951 CENSUS)

Period of Immigration	No. of Immigrants
Total	1255
Before 1911	418
1911 - 20	267
1921 - 30	233
1931 - 40	43
1941 - 45	33
1946 - 51	261

rest of the province. Other statistics were left out of this chapter as they seemed more suitably placed elsewhere.

The economic organization of the town is a reflection of its growth. Earning a living in Orillia takes a varied pattern as the occupations of the workers are divided between commercial, industrial, recreational, financial and service activities. A diversified manufacturing town like this is probably less sensitive to economic fluctuations

179

than a specialized centre would be. Certain aspects of the modern urban economy have reached the town while others have not. Large scale business and manufacturing enterprises have been established but they have not exercised any monopolized control in their respective fields because there are many small stores competing still with the large chain stores. Further the great number of diversified manufacturing industries reflects the absence of any dominating corporation in the town. The organization of labour has come upon the Orillia scene in the larger metal goods-producing factories and two or three strikes in the last few years has reflected the arrival of this 'big labour' movement.

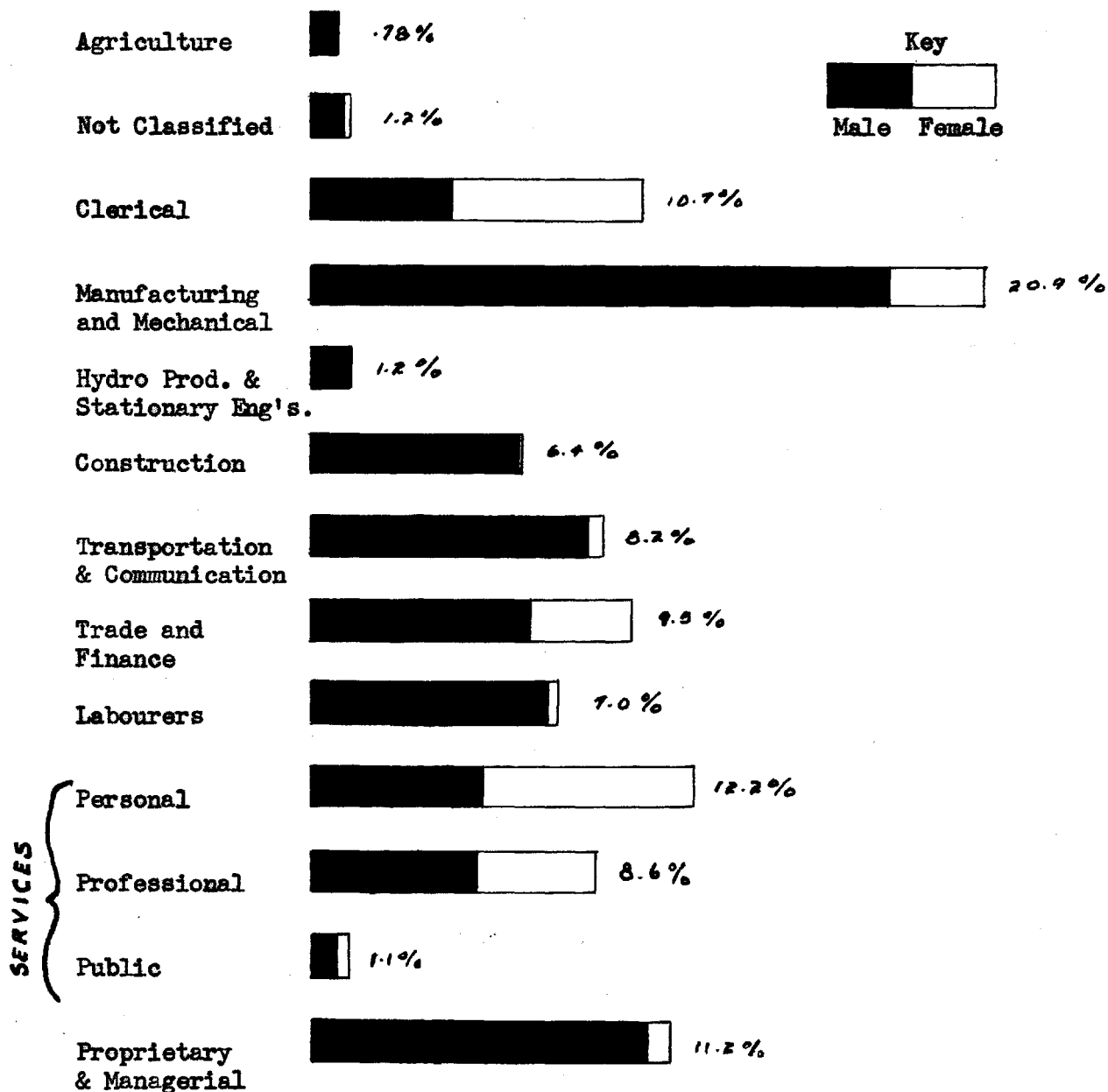
Another aspect of the urban economy is the collectivist ownership of certain services of the community as <sup>o</sup>pposed to the capitalist ownership of same. The municipal ownership of public utilities can be compared with the private ownership of the bus lines. The town had an early start in the field of public utilities and was first in North America to build a municipally owned power plant to supply hydro for the town. With new technological improvements, rural dwellers from the surrounding region either have had to migrate or commute to Orillia to earn a living. Seasonal changes occur in the occupation structure of the town which is a result of the large number of jobs made available by construction and recreation during the warmer months of the year. Many of these jobs are filled by students or part-time farmers. A current boom in business for the town is being brought by 300 odd workmen on highway construction just to the west of the town. It is expected to boost business for a one and a half year construction period. The pattern in the manufacturing field has been the expansion of existing industries as no new industries have come to the town in the last two



years. Besides the expansion of industry there has also been public and high school extension and the construction of more storm sewers. Although this trend will likely continue in manufacturing, local officials would rather see more branch industries of larger firms locate here because the town has become saturated with small industries.

The activities of the workers are shown in graphic form. Of this

OCCUPATIONS OF WAGE-EARNERS (1951 CENSUS)  
(over 14 years of age)



active population there is clearly a predominance of manufacturing and mechanical wage earners. The industrial pursuits are many and varied and the largest establishments are those connected with the output of metal products. These plants have enjoyed a normal development which is a desirable factor in maintaining prosperity and urban equilibrium. As Orillia is the only major urban centre within a twenty-five mile radius, it naturally serves as the commercial centre of this region. Hence large occupation groups are engaged in service and distribution trades which are comprised within retail, wholesale and warehousing activities. On the graph these are included under clerical, service and proprietary and managerial occupations. Also being located within a fairly prosperous farming area, the town acts as the normal trading centre for such activities.

The social life of the people does become increasingly complex as the town grows in population but unless there are large groups of very different race, religion or economic incomes, cleavages between them will unlikely occur. Linguistically Orillia is predominantly English and it is the official language spoken by over 95% of the inhabitants. Thus any racial disturbances are never found as pre-

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF<sup>F</sup> ORILLIA  
(1951 Census)

Language Group	No. Speaking
English Only	11,867
French	6
English & French	221
Neither	16

judices or hatreds have little chance to develop. Statistics on the

mother tongue of the inhabitants again shows the predominance of English so that racial barriers can be considered non-existent.

MOTHER TONGUE OF THE INHABITANTS OF ORILLIA<sup>A</sup> (1951 CENSUS)

Mother Tongue	Number	Mother Tongue	Number
English	11,847	Magyar	1
French	102	Netherlands	23
Chinese	24	Polish	27
Finnish	2	Russian	4
Gaelic	3	Scandinavian	7
German	8	Slovak	6
Italian	13	Ukrainian	20
Japanese	1	Yiddish	1
		Other	21

Religiously, it was noted earlier in this study Orillia was predominantly protestant with many smaller groups following other types of religion. Thus religious animosity has not appeared in the community. Any feelings of distrust or hatred that do arise can probably be accounted for by the gaps in the wage earner's income. This has been due to the relatively low wages paid to the workers in Orillia's industrial plants and other enterprises but which is beginning to change now that "big labour" organization has reached some of the larger concerns. Cleavages will always exist between the lower and higher income groups but this may be remedied with the rise of labour union in the town. Any impairment of the town economy could produce a crisis in the social pattern but since nearly half of the population is dependent on the greatly diversified industrial system of the town, this

is not likely to happen. Of the total population of 12,110 in 1951,

### WAGE EARNER FAMILIES IN ORILLIA

(1951 Census)

Income Bracket	No. of Families
\$ 1000	
1000 - 1999	138
2000 - 2499	769
2500 - 2999	302
3000 - 3999	196
4000 - 5999	87
6000	37

5991 were males which was a little under the 6523 total of females. The marital status of the population shows a greater number married than single and a much greater number of widowed females than their male counterparts. These statistics are more valuable to the sociologist than to the geographer because a basis for their division is not geographical. In the case of natural increase of population as

### MARITAL STATUS AND SEX (1951 CENSUS)

Single			Married			Widowed			Divorced		
T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
5325	2641	2684	6017	2958	3059	741	161	580	27	12	15

opposed to immigration, statistics would become useful but birth and death rates are not available for this study. Important to the geographer would be a correlation between the condition and type of housing with the amount of crime, diseases and death rates prevalent in the

## POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS (1951 CENSUS)

Age Group	Number	Age Group	Number
0 - 4	1410	45 - 49	657
5 - 9	1081	50 - 54	605
10 - 14	839	55 - 59	555
15 - 19	811	60 - 64	511
20 - 24	867	65 - 69	450
25 - 29	952	70 - 74	362
30 - 34	869	75 - 79	271
35 - 39	876	80 - 84	124
40 - 44	797	85 - 89	53
		90 - 94	18
		95 +	2

town and the expenditures of the police, fire and health departments in these blighted areas.

(26)

## CHAPTER 4

### ECOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF ORILLIA

Not only is the position, function and growth of any town influenced by competitive factors but the internal or ecological organization is related to economic forces also. In a small town like Orillia, however, areal differentiation is not as strikingly evident as in larger centres. There is however some functional area which can be recognized. For instance the south side of town is mainly an industrial section because of the low lying land and the railway facilities. "Natural areas" or groupings of people according to selective or cultural characteristics are not found in small centres like Orillia but neighbourhoods or local communities are typical of this town. These self-sufficing groups support a grocery store at least and their distinguishing characteristics are their close proximity, co-operation and intimate social contact. Because the ecological organization is a result of competitive forces, business and industrial establishments tend to locate where they can function most efficiently and as the community increases in size, specialization takes place in the type and location of service. The structure of the community is determined by its first routes of travel and Orillia owes its birth to its favourable location at the junction of two lakes as the waterways were a natural <sup>con</sup>veyer of the white pine lumber which was cut in the nearby forests and also was a "jumping off" place for passengers and cargo going by steamer up Lake Simcoe. Two important

roadways crossed at this point but the incentive for rapid development was provided by the installation of railway facilities. Settlement at first was between the present West Street and the lake but as the roadways came, population spread out along these routes in a ribbon development and as it increased, residences and institutions spread out in a circular zonation from the central market place while the business establishments tended to concentrate on the lands of higher value. The coming of manufacturing industries and the tourist trade replaced the lumber industry and the present activity and prosperity of the town is chiefly due to its status as a manufacturing and commercial centre. The industries have grouped near the rail lines and except for some encroachment on residential areas they are not a serious detriment to the town. The central business section which was determined by the activities of early settlement has experienced little change but a gradual expansion into residential sections has had a detrimental effect on these districts. The surrounding residential areas contiguous to the commercial and industrial sections are gradually being encroached upon and deterioration of these buildings will be the result. Streets like Colborne and Front are crowded with heavy traffic and commercial activities despite the desire of citizens to retain their residential character. Outlying districts have grown rapidly in recent years as the new residential areas have tended to develop away from the commercially active sections of the town. Without proper control provided by adequate zoning, there is little doubt that these residential sections contiguous to commercial and industrial activities will continue to deteriorate if the town continues to expand.

There is a basic need for planning in Orillia and a town zoning plan was proposed in 1950 in order to direct and control the ecological organization. The present street layout cannot be understood without some knowledge of the system of land subdivision used in the early days. Probably the topography played a lesser important role in the division of land into lots and the directions and spacing of streets than this form of subdivision. The low lying ill-drained south side of town was not settled till the manufacturing industries appeared so that the western and northern districts have had a head start as far as development is concerned. The plan shows a rectangular central business district, commercial land use at certain strategic locations, industry located near rail lines, low rent housing near the commercial and industrial sections and second and first class everywhere else. Town officials claim the present commercial area is too small for the size of the community so that the residential sections contiguous to this area will have to be dismantled if the plan is adopted by the Ontario Municipal Board. This plan is ideal for entirely new developments but is impractical for already developed areas.



(25)  
CHAPTER 5

ORILLIA AS A PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL MECHANISM

Orillia's public utilities are under the jurisdiction of the Orillia Water, Light and Power Commission which provides the town and surrounding rural districts with 60 cycle power from its three hydro electric plants and one diesel plant and also operates for the town a water pumping station and distribution system, a general sanitation system with a modern sewage disposal plant. The town's water supply comes from adjacent Lake Couchiching which is pumped through a modern filtration plant. This convenient reservoir for domestic and industrial consumption accounts for the relatively low water rates. Electric power distribution has had a long history in Orillia for this town was a pioneer in that field. It had the initiative to construct the first hydraulic plant for long distance transmission of hydro in North America and since that time has added two more plants and two diesel units. These plants have provided the town with power at a very reasonable cost and it may be said that it has been an advantageous factor in attracting light engineering industries to the town. When the power shortage hit Ontario in 1948, industrial production in Orillia did not slow down because of readily available power. The Commission also has a contract with the Ontario Hydro for reciprocal emergency power. Delivery is made from the fixe sources to the three substations in Orillia known as Central, North and South and is distributed from these on primary and secondary lines.

The sewage outlet is Lake Simcoe and with a modern disposal plant, there are no harmful effects connected with sewage disposal.

### Communications and Transportation

Intercommunications have a bearing on the mobility of the population and if these are lacking in development like an inadequate bus service, repercussions of a social and economic nature often-times result. Before 1947, Orillia lacked a bus service but with the expanding growth of population in these years, a service was instituted which aided in the development of these districts on the outlying borders of the town and also the nearby communities. Children from as far away as Coldwater a distance of 15 miles were now able to attend the local High School whose enrollment jumped considerably with this innovation. The bus lines provide a 20 minute service to all sections of town and this has certainly had a profound effect on the social and business life of the community. Besides this urban and rural communication, Orillia is also served by the Gray Coach Bus Lines running from Toronto to North Bay, and is also a terminus for a line running west to Midland and Penetang and another running east to Lindsay and Peterborough.

Orillia has one of the largest Bell Telephone district offices north of Toronto and also one of the most modern telephone exchange buildings in the province. 5800 telephone sets with dial service are now in use in Orillia alone and the company also has a rural line extending for 14 miles to the south of Orillia giving an indication of the area served by the local office. The Canadian National and



ORILLIA'S RAILWAY TERMINAL



RAILROAD YARDS

Canadian Pacific telegraph offices have been equipped with modern teletypes so that the town does not lack in quick efficient communication. The postal service is quite adequate. A new building has been proposed to take care of the increased volume of mail. Twice-a-day delivery is made to the business sections and once-a-day to the homes. Within the same building, the Customs Office is located as Orillia is a Customs Post of Entry and receipts over a half million dollars are received annually.

The radio and press provide the residents with news of local, national and international interest but confine most of their coverage to the immediate area. Two weekly papers, the "Newsletter" and the "Packet and Times" have been operating since 1884 and 1870 respectively and complete coverage of all the district news is made by them. Both have over 5000 circulation. Radio station CFOR with a 1000-watt capacity serves an area of 50-mile radius. It carries many Canadian network programmes but emphasis is placed on local and district news and the broadcasting of civic functions.

The town has an air harbour in addition to her other transport facilities. This air service provides for 2 and 4 passenger craft, repair and refueling facilities, a student training and charter service. The lakeshore of Couchiching provides the site for the harbour. Practically all of the commerce of Orillia is carried on the two main arteries of transportation, the railways and highways. The CNR has two lines crossing at Orillia, one is the Midland branch line which connects with the Montreal main line at Bellville and the other is the Toronto-Northern Ontario line which connects with Western Canadian

points. The CPR has a freight line connecting Toronto and Winnipeg which stops at Medonte, 15 miles distant from Orillia and trucks bring the freight the rest of the way. The CPR provides a daily freight service while the CNR has a daily or twice daily service. Freight delivery from Orillia reaches Toronto overnight, Montreal in 36 hours, Timmins in 36 hours, Winnipeg in three days and Detroit in two days. Both lines operate express routes by truck from the train depots to the business and residential sections of the town. Highways provide another means of transportation for the steadily growing town. The junction of provincial highways, number 11 and 12 occurs at Orillia while another road following the eastern shoreline of Lake Couchiching which is to be paved shortly connects the town with the recreational areas of this vicinity and the villages. Number 11 route is the main one between Toronto and North Bay while number 12 connects Midland with the main Toronto-Montreal line at Whitby and with number 7 highway which runs to Peterboro and Ottawa. Construction is underway on the extension of the four lane highway from Toronto to Barrie which will pass just west of Orillia. These excellent roadways connecting with other urban centres have meant the establishment of five transport companies in town.

Water transportation is provided by the Trent Waterway system of which Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching are an integral part and although large boats cannot use these waters, pleasure craft up to 60 feet in length use this route and if two more locks are finished at the northern end near Georgian Bay, craft up to 120 feet in length would be able to ply these waters. The shallowness of Couchiching and its many islands hinder navigation of a commercial nature.

## Sewers and Streets

The topography of the Orillia site sloping as it does to the southeast determines the direction of movement of sewage into the waters of Lake Simcoe but for years before the completion of a modern disposal plant the sewage had been going into Lake Simcoe improperly treated and was polluting the shore area making it unsafe for bathing purposes. Kitchener Park located near this outlet has never had a chance to develop into a playground of any magnitude because of the existence of these polluted waters offshore. Thunderstorms and the like create serious flood damage problems in homes that lack adequate storm sewer installations or sewers at all. Whether town engineers failed to see the latest growth in population or not, the problem of providing residential districts in the newly built up sections with adequate sewage facilities is acute. Their absence is conspicuous. Whether from a functional or from the point of view of hygiene, sewage disposal will continue to present a problem in Orillia.

The street system of Orillia has generally disregarded topography, traffic capacity and the function of each thoroughfare. The streets show generally a rectangular layout without regard for traffic needs. The main commercial channel of Mississaga Street lies on a small terrace overlooking the lake and with the density of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, this situation is neither conducive to parking, safety or facility in rapid circulation. Certain thoroughfares are apparently being used for a type of traffic that was not foreseen in the beginning. Calborne Street now mainly a commercial

street and somewhat congested by local traffic carries the main through traffic which has to make a number of right angle turns on its way through the town. A section of Front Street and all of Laclie Street serve also this additional function as highways though residential buildings line both sides of these streets. The hazards and disadvantages of streets utilized for all purposes are many and varied. During the summer months of July and August tourist traffic swells the normal volume and creates serious congestion. The lack of adequate intersections presents an additional problem. The factory worker traffic travels in a north-south direction while the through and other local commercial traffic travel in an east-west direction resulting in congestion. The new four lane by-pass will in all likelihood alleviate this problem. Although it can be said that the traffic density at peak hours or at peak seasons creates a problem along certain commercial and residential channels of the town, any change along these routes such as the introduction of a standardized width or the elimination of sharp turns would not justify the expense if they were merely going to function as local streets at other times of the year. The parking problem has been alleviated in recent years with the paving of the market square thus giving the town a central parking area and relieving the heavily congested main street. Aesthetically the streets of Orillia present an unique appearance with their tree-lined residential districts and "the best lighted main street on the North American continent" without unsightly poles.

## Public Safety and Welfare

Typical expressions of group or individual needs in the urban environment is the presence of institutions in the realm of public safety and social welfare. In Orillia, these include a fire department, police department and various health and social agencies. A modern fire protection service is provided by the local brigade of five permanent and eighteen volunteer firemen, an elaborate Fire Box Alarm system and 195 hydrants adequately covering the town. A Pulmotor service for resuscitation purposes especially useful since the adjacent lake is widely used for bathing in the summer. Also the force has full ladder equipment, a La France hose truck having 3000 feet of hose and a Fire Engine Pumper with a capacity of 850 gallons. As a result of this good service, the town enjoys a favourable insurance rate. The Orillia Police Force includes a local Chief, Sergeant, Corporal and five constables who are provided with radio equipped cruisers. Five Provincial Officers and two members of the R.C.M.P. have their offices located here to serve the surrounding district. The police have concerned themselves with all forms of antisocial behaviour including vice, crime and minor infractions of the law and also the regulation of the town's traffic. The legal machinery is run by a local magistrate who presides in the municipal court on only minor infractions of the law while more serious crimes are handled by the county judge in Barrie.

Hospital facilities are generally regarded as being inadequate not only for the town residents but also for surrounding rural dwellers as the one large hospital in Orillia serves a very wide area. For





MAIN HOSPITAL IN ORILLIA

approximately every 80 citizens there is one bed available in the two Orillia hospitals. The Soldier's Memorial is the largest with 110 beds in addition to the 35 beds in the new maternity wing. A training school for nurses is available also. All surgical cases are handled at this hospital as the Hillcrest Private provides only straight medical care and has only 20 beds available. The Soldier's Memorial is the only large hospital in a wide area north of Barrie. The various health and social agencies include divisions of the International Red Cross, the Victoria Order of Nurses, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire and a Simcoe County Health Unit. A considerable amount of private welfare work is carried on by churches, fraternal societies, labour unions and benefit societies. These institutions which carry on their work by private or public donations do invaluable service and as such are considered indispensable to the community.

### Cultural Institutions

The cultural needs of a community are reflected in the number of schools, churches, libraries and other institutions and these are indicative of the level of social life. The cultural activities in the town of Orillia exert an influence not only on the residents but reach out to the rural dwellers as well. To-day formal education is accepted as part of one's life and the vast programs of public education have found their greatest expression in urban centres and to a lesser degree in the countryside. Secondary or high school education is provided by the Orillia District Collegiate Institute which now serves an area of 15 mile radius because of modern bus

transportation. The school is staffed by 32 teachers and a principal who give training to 850 scholars in the commercial field, art and crafts, shop work, home economics, agriculture as well as the regular secondary education. Elementary education is provided by 6 public schools with 49 teachers serving 1700 pupils, a separate school with 6 teachers and 250 pupils and a kindergarten. A private commercial college augments the educational facilities of the town. There is an equitable distribution of schools at the elementary level but the local High School is considered inadequate at the moment to handle the increasing number of pupils who are taking advantage of the bus service that is provided for them. A new extension has been proposed to add to the recently built addition. \$34,000 was spent on public school extension in 1951 which indicates the interest in public education. In the rural areas there has been a certain amount of consolidation of small schools and the little red schoolhouse is gradually disappearing. In theory, possibly because of better transportation service and the greater number of schools, every child is beginning to enjoy equal educational opportunities regardless of class status but in actual fact this is not the case. From the table it can be seen that the

POPULATION OVER 5 YEARS OLD (10,700) (ORILLIA CENSUS)  
ATTENDING AND NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL 1951

Years of Schooling		0	1-4	5-8	9-12	13 & Over
Total Nos.						
Number Attending	1806		815	630	295	66
Number not Attending	8894	422	305	3918	3377	872

number now attending school is comparatively small and represents only a half of the school age population (5-24 years of age). The number



CULTURAL INSTITUTION - HIGH SCHOOL (NEW ADDITION SEEN)



CULTURAL INSTITUTION - PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

who have finished their schooling shows a greater percentage with an elementary education than those who have obtained a higher education. This lack of formal education has been the result of social and economic factors within each family group.

The places of worship in Orillia are numerous but not well distributed. There are eleven churches each representing a different denomination although there are two Gospel Halls, two Pentecostal churches and two Anglican Churches. There is an Apostolic, Bethel Baptist, Catholic, Missionary Alliance, Baptist, Salvation Army, Presbyterian and United Church besides the number of rural religious institutions which are predominantly protestant. Within the town there are over fifteen different religious faiths and the greatest memberships belong to the United, Anglican and Presbyterian churches. This pre-

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN ORILLIA (1951 CENSUS)

Religious Faith	Membership
United	3817
Anglican	2769
Presbyterian	2226
Roman Catholic	1345
Baptist	1113
Salvation Army	139
Pentecostal	83
Jewish	41
Evangelical	38
Lutheran	37
Ukranian Catholic	15
Greek Orthodox	5
Christian Science	2
Confucians Buddhist	1
Mennonite	1
Other	478

dominance of Proetstant church goers is a reflection of the fact that over 85% of the population is of Anglo-Saxon origin. The absence of the European element in the town accounts for the relatively small

POPULATION BY ORIGIN-ORILLIA (1951 CENSUS)

Br.Is.	European														Asiatic			Native Indian & Eskimo	Oth.
	Fr.	Aust.	Oz.	Fin.	Ger.	Hung.	Ita.	Jew	Neth.	Pol.	Rus.	Scan.	Uk.	Oth.	Chi,	Jap.	Oth.		
10448	423	8	6	7	170	3	45	30	268	51	10	42	41	34	27	1	1	25	470

Catholic population. Many of the churches have expanded their functions beyond strictly theological matters and have become interested in the social application of their religious principles especially in recreation and welfare activities. Women's Missionary Societies, Ladies Aid Societies, Young Men's Societies, boy and girl scouts, kindergarten, relief services and playground work have been fostered by the local religious institutions. Most of them sponsor Sunday Schools as well. Many of the churches are found within or just beyond the commercial core of the town and this lack of an equitable distribution means that only certain sections of the town are provided with a nearby place of worship. New residential districts have developed without any provision of land for this indispensable facility. Thus the greater number of church goers come from within a short radius of the churches.

The only municipal library in town has over 12,000 volumes. It has a separate Children's Department and the staff consists of three librarians. The extent to which the library facilities are used gives some indication of the intellectual level of the community. The total

professional class population of Orillia is fairly small in proportion to the number of manual labourers which means that there is less interest in cultural activities.

The press may be considered as a cultural institution since it reflects the intellectual standards and interests of the community. The two local weekly newspapers provide a record of events whether trivial or important. Toronto daily newspapers are sold regularly in Orillia. To give an indication of the growth of the town in recent years, the local weeklies have started a departmentalization of their issues following the pattern of other newspapers in the large urban centres.

Other cultural institutions are few in number. The town lacks a theatre and any operatic, musical or dramatic performances are staged in the privately owned movie theatres, church auditoriums, small community auditoriums or the indoor sports arean. The Community Centre has a seating capacity for 2000 with emergency standing room available for 1500. The parochial halls and other auditoriums provide inadequate accomodations.

### Recreational Facilities

The leisure time activities that the town engages in constitutes an important part of the life of the people. The commercialized recreational facilities of the dance hall and the movie house and other forms of public and improvised facilities provide for a great percentage of the residents a suitable form of relaxation and recreation.

The park areas of Orillia are used for both relaxation and



ORILLIA'S COMMUNITY CENTRE



OVAL SPORTS GROUND



physical culture activities. Only one of these parks has any significance as the others are too small and lack proper facilities. Couchiching Beach Park on the lakeshore is noted for its famous Champlain monument but aside from its aesthetic value, this 15-acre park has a ball diamond, bathing facilities, children's playground, picnic and summer band concert facilities. The other two park areas offer little to the townspeople in the form of recreation hence they should be developed to provide additional areas to the already congested lakeshore park. Commercialized recreation has developed in Orillia to the point where admission charges and membership fees are taken for granted. Three movie theatres, one with an open air stage satisfy the many moviegoers. Two dance halls in the town and the dance pavilions at the summer resorts around the lakes provide opportunities for social intercourse. Indoor bowling is carried on at the local academy and the Y.M.C.A. while the lawn bowling enthusiasts carry on their activities at the Provincial Hospital court on the outskirts of town. For sporting events, the Community Centre Arena and the Oval grounds provide for the main sports attractions. In the summer, lacrosse exhibitions and roller skating enthusiasts utilize the arena floor while the floodlighted oval has facilities for baseball, softball and football. In the winter, the Community and District Hockey Leagues, figure skaters and others utilize the arena. The Orillia Ski Club boasts of a good membership while the local Curling Club has the third largest membership of any curling club in Ontario and have their own artificial ice palace and clubhouse. A local nine hole golf course provides a form of exercise for the golfing fraternity. The local Y.M.C.A. carries on a large program of athletic events and campfire outings for the teen-



RECREATIONAL LAND USE - GOLF COURSE



RECREATIONAL LAND USE - DANCE PAVILION

age population while the High School has athletic teams that vie for district honours. For water sports, the town is ideally situated as the two lakes provide for swimming, motor-boating, canoeing, yachting, fishing and other forms of relaxation. Bass Lake about three miles west of town provides a lesser important spot for the recreation-seeking Orillians. Despite these available facilities, there is generally a lack of parks and playgrounds, beaches, tennis courts and other forms of physical education pursuits. Provision should be made for more open spaces so that children and adults alike may be able to participate more fully in recreational activities. Organized community recreation has had a start in the south and west wards of the town and the biggest problem as usual is a lack of funds. The only means to maintain these organizations is through private philanthropy or public revenues neither of which have been readily forthcoming to date.

### Town Government

There has been in recent years a vast expansion in the number of functions performed by Orillia's municipal government. For example, the government of Orillia has now extended its influence into the fields of education, recreation, public utilities and other phases of public life.

The administration follows the age old pattern of mayor-council elected annually. Besides the Mayor, a Reeve, Deputy-Reeve and six Aldermen head the government which is augmented by various municipal boards administering services to the town. The Orillia Water, Light

and Power Commission composed of four elected members, two elected each year for a two year term and the Mayor controls the hydro electric plants which provides the town and rural district with 60 cycle power. In addition the Commission operates the town water pumping station and distribution system, the sanitary sewers as well as the sewage disposal plant. Other municipal bodies include the Public School Board, District Collegiate Institute Board, Library Board, Parks Board, and a Town Planning Board. Each member of the council including the Mayor becomes chairman of a committee which looks after a certain phase of the town's business. For example there is a Fire and Water Hydrant Committee, Works and Sanitation Committee, Finances and Assessment Committee, Industrial Committee and a Chairman of Reception and Publicity. Over 60% of the eligible voters turned out last election day. A further expansion of the functions of municipal officials is likely to appear in the future because of the steadily growing population which adds to the complexity of the social life of the people.

### Food Supply

The growth of the town and its degree of specialization can be seen from the methods by which it obtains its food supply. The many delivery wagons and refrigerated trucks give evidence of the complex organization which has grown up to meet the urgent demands of the town dwellers. The grocery chain stores are represented in Orillia by Loblaws and Dominion which are supplied by their own warehouses in Toronto. Truck transportation seems to be the mode of delivery for food products coming into town probably because of the high cost of railroad

shipment and the short accessible distance by highway from the distributing centre of Toronto. Two wholesale distributing houses, York Trading and National Groceries provide the town with the bulk of its food supply while also distributing to nearby urban centres showing the strategic position held by Orillia in this central region of Southern Ontario. York Trading for example has other branches in Owen Sound, Peterboro and Toronto giving an indication of the wide area served by the Orillia branch. Canned goods and packaged cereal from other parts of Ontario constitute the greatest bulk of foodstuffs that are distributed by these companies. Citrus fruits from Florida, beans and salmon from British Columbia, and sardines from the east coast make up the lesser important food items handled by these wholesale establishments which supply the local retail outlets. Refrigerated trucks from Swifts and Canada Packers in Toronto keep the town butcher shops and smaller grocery stores replenished with the great bulk of meat and meat products although farmers in the rural districts do supply a small percentage of these commodities.

Although the immediate hinterland of Orillia supports a fairly prosperous farming economy, the local farmer's market has lost its former significance. With the advent of modern transportation facilities condensed food products could be brought long distances daily at cheap rates thus displacing the Saturday market as a source for food. However in the late summer months when fruit is being marketed, trucks from as far away as Chatham and the Niagara Peninsula appear on the local market. From the surrounding general farming area, farmers come in to sell many different food products but concentrate on meat, fowl and vegetables. Also the unland supplies the town with its cream and milk which is dis-

tributed by the half dozen dairy companies. The town creamery utilizes the cream for butter and ice cream manufacture. Within the town limits market gardening has developed in recent years and these gardeners along with the market gardeners of the Holland Marsh at the southern tip of Lake Simcoe supply the local fruit and vegetable stores.

Type and Function of Buildings

Since land values are the chief determining factor in the location of any building and the segregation of local areas, Orillia's zone of industry is found on the flat-lying southern section of town where the value of land is comparatively low because it is useless for any other type of land use. Most of the industries were established along the railways and the lakefront and were gradually surrounded by residential buildings which have caused present inconveniences. To-day little use is made of the lake for industrial purposes other than the making of pleasure craft, sailboats, etc. The railways have remained the most important transportation artery for the raw materials and finished products of Orillia's industry while the highways play a lesser important role. Undoubtedly the rail lines will be the determining locating factor for any new industries coming to town that require handling of bulky materials. The zoning plan proposed for the town calls for a segregation of these areas contiguous to the rail lines in order to properly control any expansion of industry.

The functions of the manufacturing plants in Orillia are different to say the least and the one great feature notable in the industry is the diversification. Because the growth of industry in Orillia has



AN ORILLIA INDUSTRY



INDUSTRIAL ENCROACHMENT ON RESIDENTIAL AREA

WILLS MEMOR  
LIBRARY  
MCMASTER UNIVER

followed many different aspects and in some instances becoming complementary to each other, the result is that no one industry has come to dominate the town economy. A recession in one line of manufacture does not have a profound effect on the economic life of the community. The different machines and materials used by the various plants indicates that one industry may act as a supplier for another and the wide variety of products means that two industries may be complementary to one another. For example the marine engines constructed by Buchanan Limited often power the pleasure cruisers built by the two boat manufacturing companies. Thus money which might normally leave town is spent on the employment of more Orillia labourers. There are more than 35 factories in the town each producing a different finished product but with strong emphasis on metal products. The list is endless ranging from a small wooden knob manufactured by Canada Wood Speciality to an immense pulp filter made by E. Long Limited. Worsted yarns for machine and hand knitting, mackinaw clothing and pant manufacture, building materials, outdoor porcelain advertising signs, baby carriages, agricultural implements and domestic appliances are included in the great variety of production. The nuisance value of these industries on public welfare and hygiene is reduced to a minimum because they are mainly <sup>light</sup> manufacturing types.

The great percentage of the industrial population is engaged in the manufacture of metal products. There are over 2100 employees in the industries of Orillia who support an average of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  dependents each making a total of 5000 persons who are directly dependent on the local plants for their livelihood. Over  $3\frac{1}{4}$  million dollars is the annual payroll of the Orillia plants of which an estimated 75% is spent in the town for food, clothing, housing, taxes, medical and professional services,



entertainment and transportation. This local spending power means a great deal of business for the town stores and offices and it can be truly said that when industry hums, Orillia prospers.

In urban centres, it is in the main business district that the highest land values are usually found. Although the skyscraper has not appeared on the Orillia scene there is a very intensive use of land in the commercial core of the town. There has been a gradual expansion into the surrounding residential sections giving rise to small blighted areas. The town planners see a need for enlargement of the main business district because of the new expansions of residents into the outlying districts making the shopping centre a considerable distance away.

On the very highest priced land are the department stores, five-and-ten-cent stores, ladies' and men's clothing stores, restaurants, jewellery stores, food stores, drug stores, banks and trust companies, bake shops, barber shops, beauty parlors, theatres, municipal buildings and offices for business and professional use. Immediately adjacent to the main business district are the hotels, dairies, premises licensed for sale of beer, wine or liquor, laundries, animal hospitals, automotive repair, shops and yards, automotive sales and services, building contractor's yards, building material supply yards, bus depots, cleaners and dyers, cold storage lockers, commercial garages, gasoline filling and service stations, greenhouses, public utility plants, telephone exchange, tourist homes, undertaker's establishments, used car lots, welding shops, wholesale stores and warehouses. The other commercial area is the tourist establishments along the southwest shore of Lake Couchiching. Seasonal traffic characterizes the commercial sections of town being quite



ORILLIA'S MAIN STREET



A MODERN COMMERCIAL HOTEL

heavy in the summer months and much lighter the rest of the year due to the large influx of tourists from the big urban centres to the south of Orillia and from across the international border. All this means a seasonal heavy business for the town's 250 retail stores, garages, professional offices and other businesses. Besides its function as a supply centre for the tourists, the downtown area is provided further with a sizeable amount of business each year by the 5000 people dependent on the local industrial plants. The remaining wage earners and their dependents in addition to the large number of surrounding rural dwellers who use this natural supply and trading centre form the other sources of income for the shopping centre.

In general the housing standards within the urban region of Orillia compare favourably with other centres of its size and because of its relatively small industrial enterprises and natural environment, these standards are superior in many respects. Industrial and commercial encroachment has been the cause of some blighted areas while the proximity to railways, low lying lands and lands unsuitable for housing construction has lowered the value of more than a few dwellings.

Second class houses constitute the greater number of units in Orillia and they are mainly one family dwellings composed of brick, stone or wood. They range from 1-2½ storeys in height. Also included in this broad classification are the semi-detached, duplex, double duplex, boarding and rooming houses. The first class housing is found in the central northern section of town where the early manufacturers built their spacious homes of stone and brick. Third class housing is found immediately to the north of the commercial section in addition many of the deteriorated areas surrounding and between the commercial



FIRST CLASS HOUSING



SECOND CLASS HOUSING

and industrial sections belong to this category. These deplorable areas are the result of misuse of land, lack of foresight and inadequate zoning and are not necessarily the result of poverty. Within this blighted area to the north of the commercial section are found apartment buildings and even first class housing indicating that these unattractive housing areas are not well defined.



APARTMENT BUILDING IN ORILLIA



SPACIOUS LAKESHORE HOME NEAR ORILLIA

(58)

## CHAPTER 6

### TOURISM

As a factor in the prosperity of the town the advantages obtained from tourism are self-evident. Situated in a naturally beautiful setting and on the short accessible routes from the large Southern Ontario urban centres and the heavily populated sections across the border, Orillia enjoys a tourist trade that reaches very high proportions. The wealth accruing from tourism is shown in the fact that one of Orillia's largest food stores receives up to 30% of its annual intake in the tourist season.

Within Orillia and its environs there are many attractive places and their accessibility by highways and other roadways is very much in evidence. Highways run parallel with Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching on both sides providing accessible approaches for the cottagers and vacationists. Farmlands, forest and water provide a suitable setting. It is mostly private cottages on the west and east shores of Lake Simcoe while a few commercial tourist establishments appear on the north shore which has too much marshland for any great development. Lake Couchiching on the other hand has developed more commercially with a number of resort hotels, an international Y.M.C.A. camp and parochial sponsored camps dotting its shores. The other smaller lakes are only a short distance away and they also have cottage developments around their shores. In all these lakes, boating, bathing and fishing are carried on to give enjoyment to the many seasonal visitors.



RESORT HOTEL ON LAKESHORE NEAR ORILLIA



MOTEL DEVELOPMENT ON HIGHWAY NORTH OF ORILLIA



The inhabitants of the area have long been conscious of the beauty of the site and as such took advantage of it for their own enjoyment as well as for others. Three hotels within the town and eight tourist lodges in the surrounding area testify to the large business enjoyed by this region. The parks with their monuments and recreational facilities add to the attractiveness of the town in addition to its good business section with modern store fronts, eating accommodation and well lighted street. Tourist homes throughout the town and cabins clustered along the highways to the north and east provide sleeping accommodations for those passing through. Within the urban area along Lake Couchiching, accessibility for the public to its shores has not been developed too highly mainly because of private ownership of the land. If this situation could be remedied an even greater amount of trade could be enjoyed. Enjoyable boating trips up the Trent Waterway System are available to the many vacation seekers in addition to the flying trips in the pontoon equipped planes. Summer athletic activities are provided for the sporting public. A motor camp of 50 acres of wooded lakeshore property is operated by the town for summer visitors who wish to set up a tent, live in a trailer or in a cabin for a few days or weeks.

For these many summer visitors within the town and the surrounding area, Orillia acts as the natural supply centre and has thus reaped great rewards from its location. A physical landscape not marred with heavy industries and endowed with a favourable summer climate has contributed to the prosperity of Orillia.

## CHAPTER 7

ORILLIA AND ITS UMLAND

Although the surrounding area of Orillia cannot be considered a "natural area", the town may be spoken of as a "natural capital". It is so because it is a natural supply and trading centre for an area of approximately 15 miles radius. As a buying and selling function, the town serves as an intermediary between the production of its environs and its demands from the exterior. In its commercial role as a distributing centre, we have seen how the town supplies this area with goods brought from other sources. Even goods produced in the town find their way to the immediate vicinity and these are mainly producer's goods like agricultural machinery and domestic appliances.

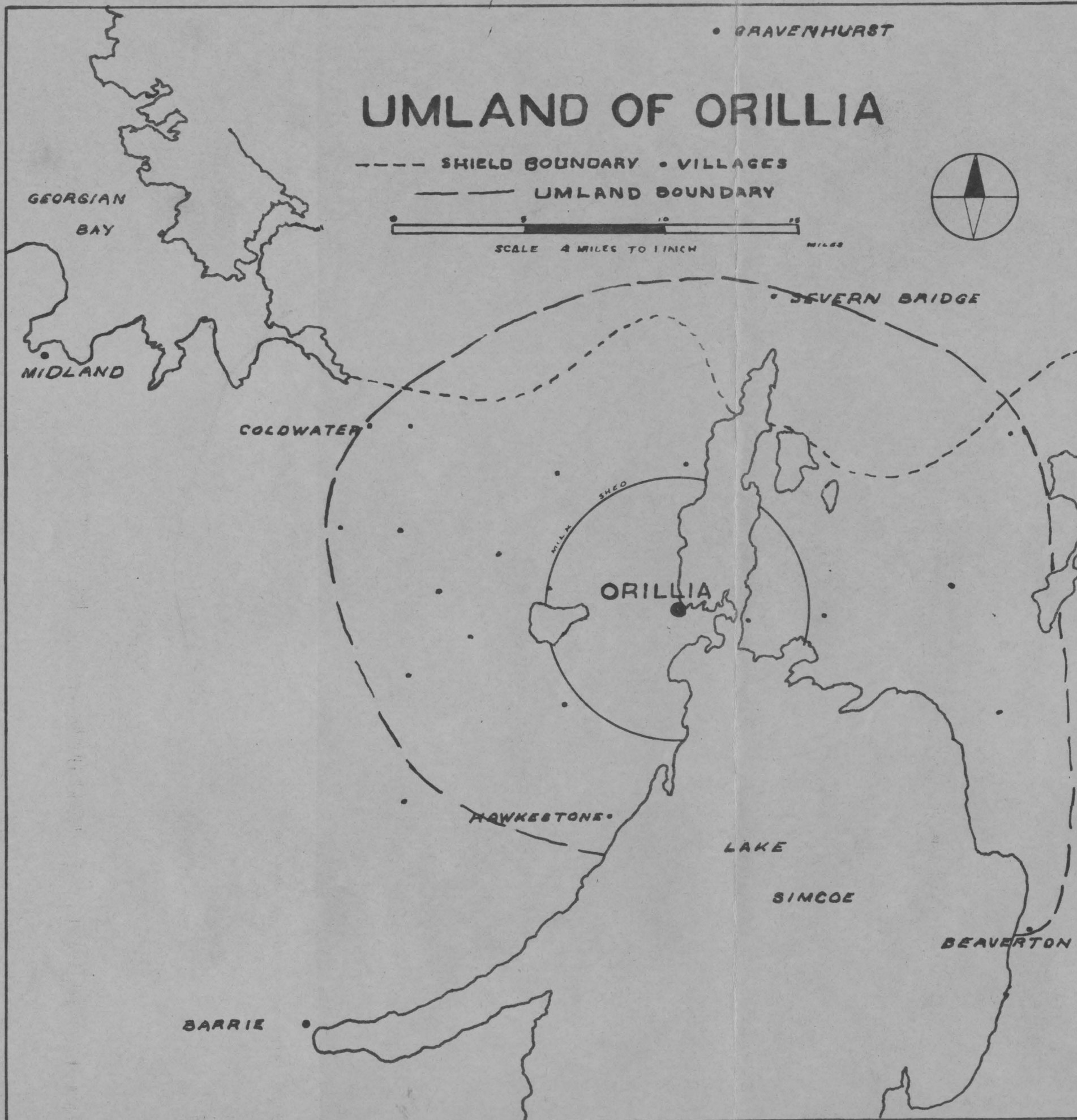
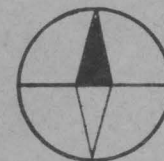
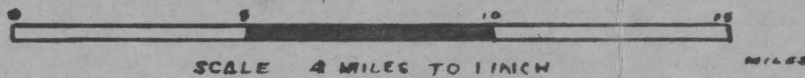
As a seat of industry, commerce, culture and administration, the town caters not only to its own inhabitants but also to those in the surrounding countryside. Engaged in non-agricultural occupations, the townspeople are employed in the two broad categories of service and industry. The satisfaction of human wants by direct contact with the consumer is attained through the various commercial, cultural, professional and administrative offices. The surrounding area has its farmers cooperatives and other associations located in the town. Because of the increased numbers and complexity of services, they have tended to concentrate in the larger urban centres with the result that Orillia has grown tremendously as a servicing centre. Her 250 retail stores, professional offices, garages and other establishments are evidence of the volume of trade carried on. As an administrative centre, the town

• GRAVENHURST

# UMLAND OF ORILLIA

--- SHIELD BOUNDARY • VILLAGES

— UMLAND BOUNDARY



has a large post office and a customs office and an Employment Service Bureau which serves a large area extending from Beaverton in the east to near Waubaushene in the east and to within four miles of Gravenhurst in the north. Many towns like Orillia owe their "raison d'etre" to the growth of industry. The basic manufacturing industries form the foundation of the occupational pyramid of the community and these occupations are not dependent on the existence of other types of production. It is not an occupationally specialized community so that it would be far less vulnerable to an economic depression than would a specialized community. The industrial hinterland of Orillia stretches much further than the immediate area and markets for the great variety of products are found in the far off countries of Europe and Africa as well as the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Manufacturing in Orillia is not tied to local markets or local materials but draws on other localities for her raw materials in return supplying them with producer's goods. The products distributed to the immediate area include only agricultural machinery, building materials, clothing, hardware tools and other types of machinery. The manipulating and handling of these goods has certainly been a great factor in the functional occupations of the town's wage earners.

The large number of banks, specialized retail shops and commercial, administrative and professional offices has meant a relatively wide trading area for the town. It is estimated that the unland population reaches about 25,000 which shows the need for an attractive and well stocked commercial centre in the town. Orillia's milk shed is an area of 5 mile radius from the town. Market gardening is carried on in small localized areas within the town limits. This has been the outcome of a

close urban market. The many services provided by the town means a drawing card not only for the farmers and tourists but also the non-farm population in the many hamlets dotting the landscape in the surrounding area. The primary services are the food stores for the most part while the secondary services include the remainder of the shops and offices. The area of maximum influence of the town stretches from Beaverton in the east to Severn Bridge in the north to Coldwater in the west and to Hawkestone in the south. Of course these centres are provided with some of the services found in Orillia. For instance branches of the Bank of Commerce are found in Beaverton, Brechin and Coldwater as well as the Orillia branch but no bank is found to the north nearer than Gravenhurst. These centres have relatively small populations and only until we reach the urban centres of Barrie, Midland, Gravenhurst and as far east as Lindsay do we find most of the services that are found in Orillia. The umlands of these centres may overlap the umland of Orillia and the people in these "interstices" areas may go to either centre. About midway between Orillia and Barrie, farmers would be going to one centre in one week and the other one in another week as both centres provide about the same amount of services. Midland with a population of approximately 8000 can provide many of the needs for its hinterland and probably most of the population west of Coldwater travel to Midland. To the north there is no centre of comparable size to Orillia until one reaches North Bay but the tourist towns of the Muskoka area provide a certain amount of service to the rural dwellers in their respective areas. The umland boundary to the north of Orillia can be considered a physical boundary as the Shield area provides the



A PROSPEROUS FARM NEAR ORILLIA



BEEF CATTLE ON FARM NEAR ORILLIA



SHIELD EXPOSURE 10 MILES NORTH OF ORILLIA

dividing line between arable land and forest and recreational country. Orillia has this unique setting in the general farming zone of Southern Ontario near the exposed rock of the Canadian Shield.

The town then is a seat of non-specialized occupations producing goods both for the extensive market and for the local service area. Food supplies are drawn from an extensive hinterland and are distributed to a much smaller service area. The town is the centre of services and organization for the surrounding district and the provision of these services to the countryside has had a profound effect on the standard of rural living. The town and the country have become increasingly interdependent and as such, have contributed to each other's prosperity.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The manufacturing industries of the town, the natural scenery and agriculture of the surrounding area have contributed greatly to the prosperity of Orillia. Industry began as a "local affair" shortly before the turn of the present century with the establishment of a horseless carriage factory. Since that date a steady increase in the number of factories has paralleled the growth of population of the town. With the availability of cheap hydro electric power, an adequate supply of labour, good sites, proximity to markets and sources of raw materials and good transportation facilities, manufacturing in Orillia has assumed large proportions and is now the town's major source of wealth. The diversification and complementary nature of industry has meant a stable town economy since it is less vulnerable to a widespread economic depression than a specialized industrial centre. The plants and their employees spend nearly \$850,000 for supplies and services in the town of Orillia, buy over 50% of Orillia's electric power output and pay an estimated 40% of Orillia's tax bills. The existing relationship between town and industry should be maintained.

The naturally beautiful setting in which Orillia is located has meant a steady growth in Tourism since the Couchiching Point Hotel was erected in the 1870's. With the development of faster means of communication, improved roadways, more leisure time and the proximity to large agglomerated settlements Tourism developed in the Orillia area on a great commercial scale and the value it has meant to the town is seen in the financial statements of the various supply depots. If the town continues to take advantage of its setting not only for its own interests but also



for outside interests, it will undoubtedly add to the general prosperity of the town and its citizens. Certain sections of the 13-mile shoreline surrounding the town ought to be developed so that further space might be available to the summer visitors.

The agriculture of the surrounding area has had a fairly good development with emphasis mainly on general farming. Within the trade area of Orillia, dairy farming is predominant. There is a great diversity of soil types which has meant a wide diversity in crops grown. Production of beef cattle and fodder crops on the better soils and a cultivation of market crops on the sandy soil areas has been the practice. Newer more adaptable crops such as tobacco may be the trend in future years. The best agricultural areas are confined largely to southern and western regions from the town since less productive soils have precluded prosperous farming to the north. Orillia will remain a natural supply centre for these farmers and every effort to maintain this connection with the countryside should be exercised.

In the whole Southern Ontario lowland, it is reasonable to expect that industrialization will continue on a fairly rapid scale. Orillia is likely to share in this continued expansion. Orillia now enjoys an extensive market for her industrial products and her geographical setting in Southern Ontario gives her many advantages. It is unlikely that it will ever become a centre for heavy industry like iron and steel but undoubtedly light manufacturing concerns and branch firms will continue to locate here.

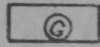
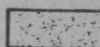
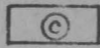
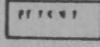
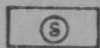
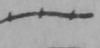
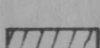


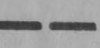
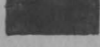
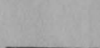
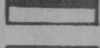
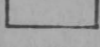
One of the most important factors in the development of Orillia's manufacturing industry was the utilization of the local sources of hydro electric energy at a relatively early date. Perhaps this more than anything else is the reason why this industry is at present more important than the tourist trade or commercial activities.

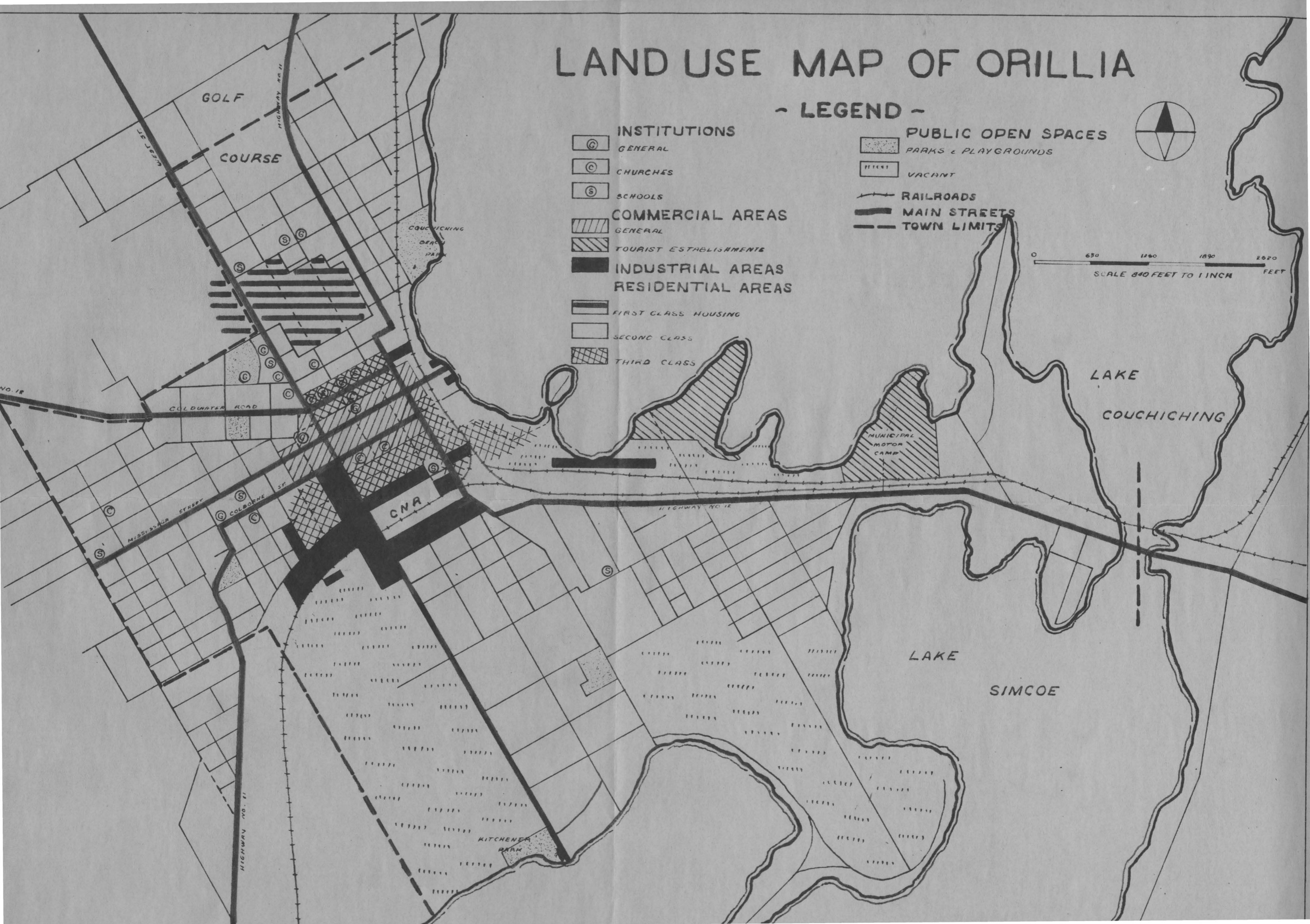
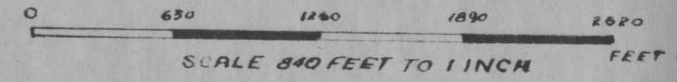
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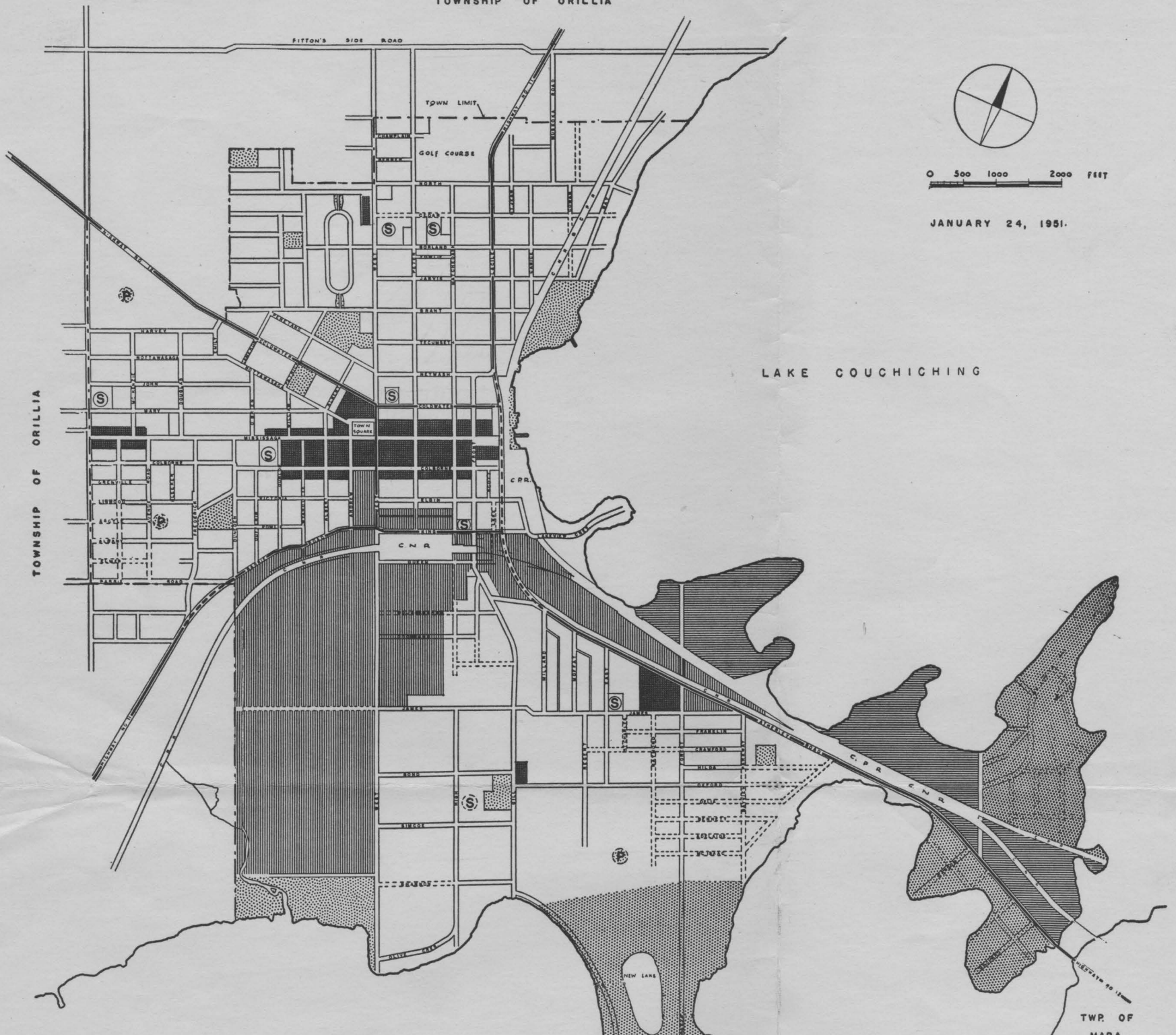
# LAND USE MAP OF ORILLIA

## - LEGEND -

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  INSTITUTIONS<br>GENERAL                  |  PUBLIC OPEN SPACES<br>PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS |
|  CHURCHES                                 |  VACANT                                    |
|  SCHOOLS                                  |  RAILROADS                                 |
|  COMMERCIAL AREAS<br>GENERAL              |  MAIN STREETS                              |
|  TOURIST ESTABLISHMENTS                   |  TOWN LIMITS                               |
|  INDUSTRIAL AREAS                         |   |
|  RESIDENTIAL AREAS<br>FIRST CLASS HOUSING |   |
|  SECOND CLASS                             |   |
|  THIRD CLASS                              |   |



TOWNSHIP OF ORILLIA



0 500 1000 2000 FEET


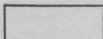


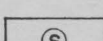
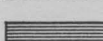





JANUARY 24, 1951.

TOWNSHIP OF ORILLIA

LAKE COUCHICHING

TWP. OF MARA

LAKE SIMCOE

-  PARKS
  -  RESIDENTIAL
  -  COMMERCIAL
  -  INDUSTRIAL
  -  SCHOOL SITE
  -  TOURIST ESTABLISHMENTS
  -  DEVELOPMENT AREA
  -  MAJOR ROAD SYSTEM
  -  PROPOSED
-  PROPOSED  
 PROPOSED

PLAN OF ORILLIA