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RAMA TOWNSHIP

BY

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Presented to  
the Department of Geography  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree  
Bachelor of Arts

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to take this opportunity to express her sincere thanks to the countless people who have made this thesis possible.

Special gratitude is due Professor L.G. Reeds for his untiring patience and sound advice. Also the effort and inspiration of Clare and Ted Heather, Arthur Buckley, and Henry King have been invaluable.



## Introduction

This thesis is a regional study of the physical and human geography of Rama Township. An area of 35,954 acres, it is situated on the east shore of Lake Couchiching. Within the township's boundaries there are two lakes - Lake St. John (pronounced Sin-jun) and Mud Lake. There are also several rivers, the most important being the Black River and its tributary, the Head River. The Severn River marks the north-western limit of the township. Two railways, both Canadian National, traverse the area, converging at Washago. Highway 11 and 12 lead to Rama from large population centres. There are 81 miles of road within the township. Highway #69 is provincial and follows the Couchiching shore. Although gravel, it is kept in fair condition. There is one county road reaching from O'Connell to Fawcett which is also well kept. The remaining are township roads and are not usually in very good condition.

Rama Township has a population of 653. Of these, 379 are concentrated along the lakeshore. There is an additional 375 Indian residents.<sup>1</sup> A large summer population, much of which is transient, swells this total during the warmer months. The progress of Rama has been limited to some extent by the environment. In some cases, the people have overcome difficulties and made very satisfactory adjustments to adverse conditions. Yet if the people of Rama Township could understand their environment more fully,

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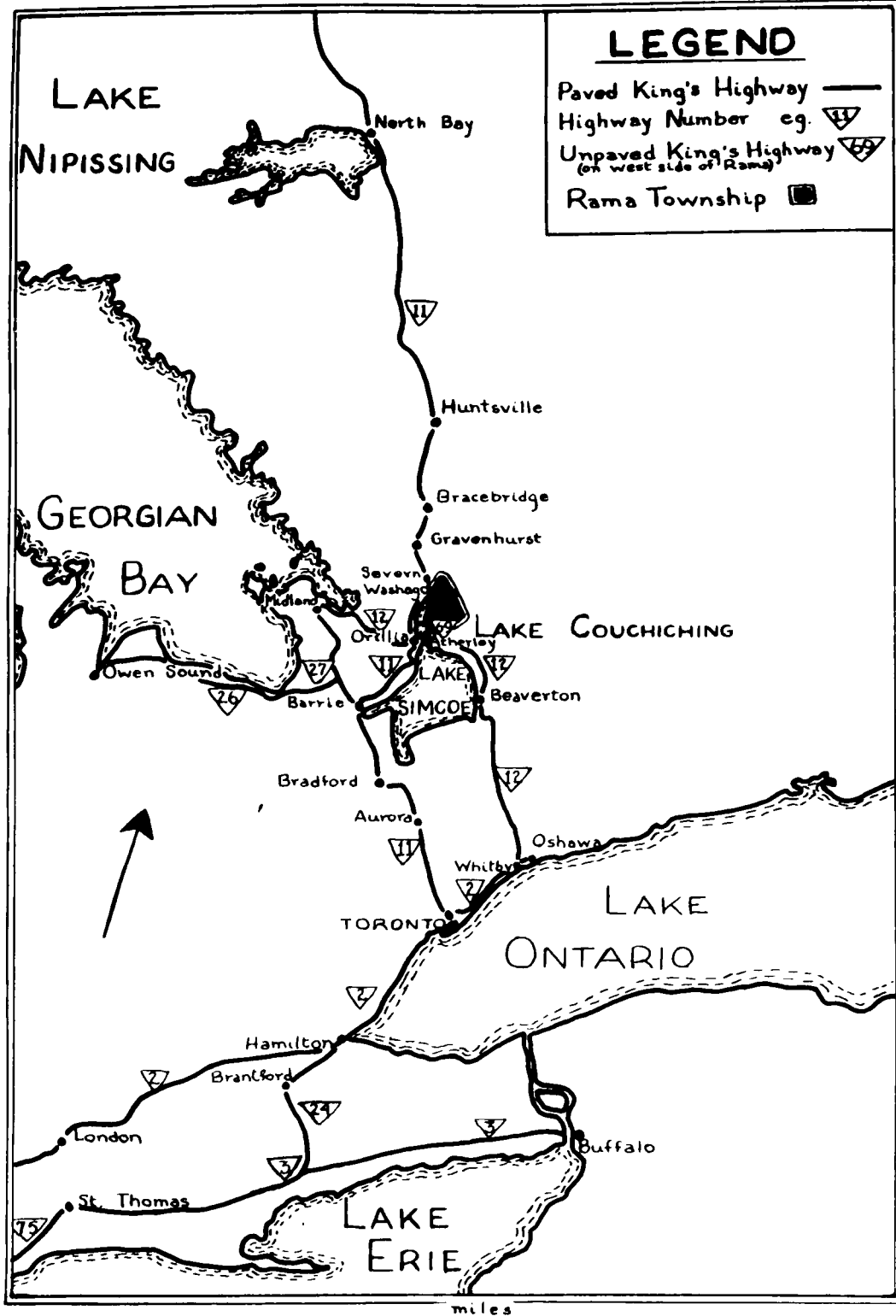
<sup>1</sup>Local Census - 1951

they would be able to gain a more balanced economy, a more efficient land utilization, and some types of specialization which would provide a surplus for sale outside of the township. If this could be done, the threatening bonds of self-sufficiency would be broken.



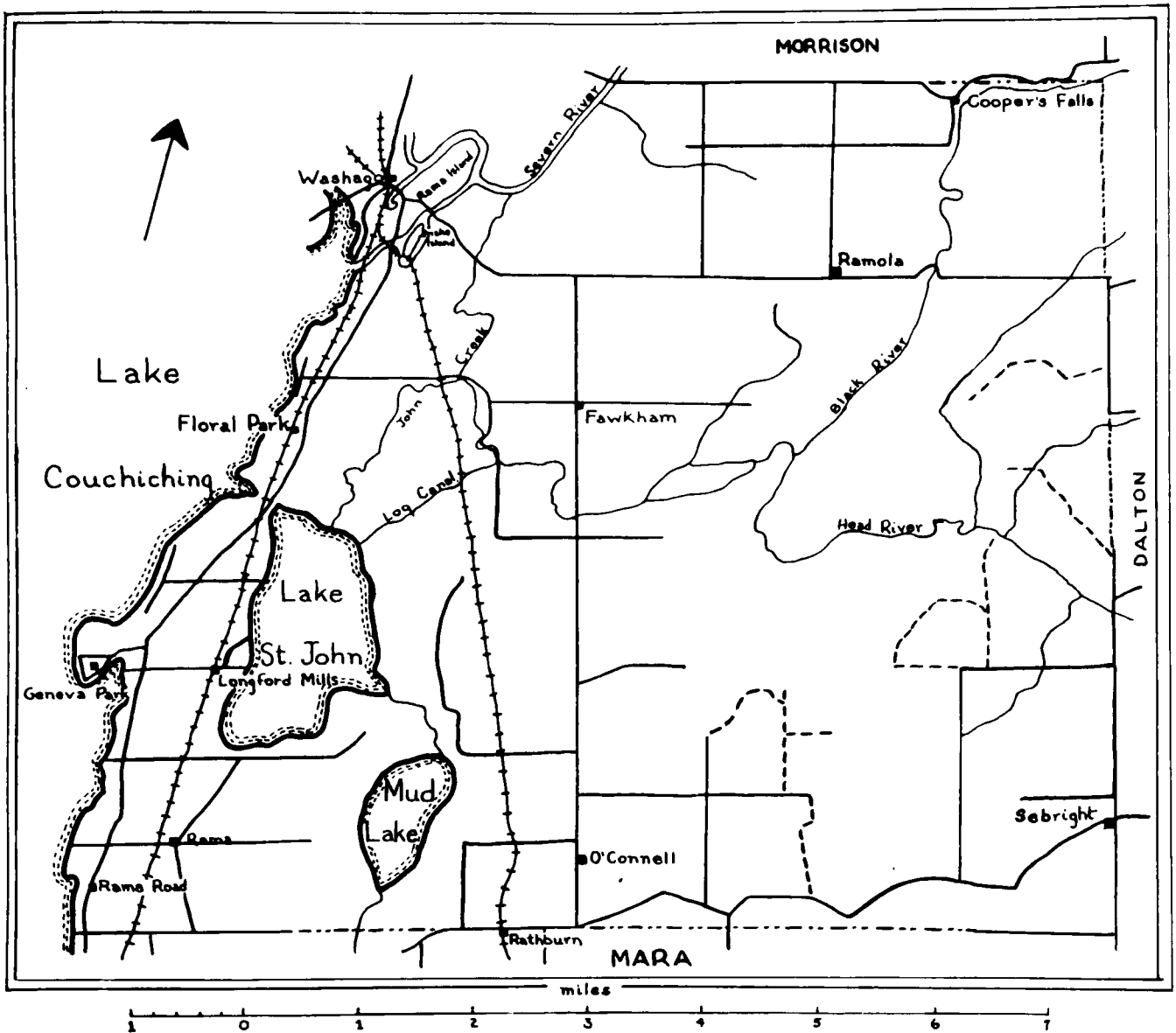
# LOCATION MAP

Plate 1



# RAMA TOWNSHIP

Plate 2



## LEGEND

- Road
- - - Road Allowance
- - - - Township Boundary
- + + + + C.N.R. line



## PART I

### PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

#### Chapter 1

#### Land Type

Rama township may be divided roughly into two sections. To the north, Pre-Cambrian rocks of the Canadian Shield dominate the most extensive division. The southern portion is underlain by Ordovician rocks. Glaciation during Pleistocene times has modified these surfaces. The Pre-Cambrian granites and gneisses were scoured by erosional processes, producing an area of rock-knob lowlands which is marked by granitic outcrops and drift-filled depressions. This area is relatively flat and generally under 800 feet above sea level, characterized by its roches moutonnes and rugged appearance. The drift thickens in the south as glacial deposition and Paleozoic rocks feature the landscape. The relief of softly undulating ground moraine is often broken by an exposed limestone plain or low drumlin. Deposits from glacial Lake Algonquin are also evident in the south and in isolated pockets of the north. Elevation increases slightly, exceeding 800 feet in the south-east, but the whole township is extremely flat with a variation of approximately 106 feet throughout the area. Thus marsh persists in the lowlands and drainage is generally poor. In classifying land type, it may be concluded that the northern portion is a rock-knob lowland while the southern section is divided into three general regions of limestone plains, Algonquin Lake plain, and drumlinized till plain.<sup>1</sup>

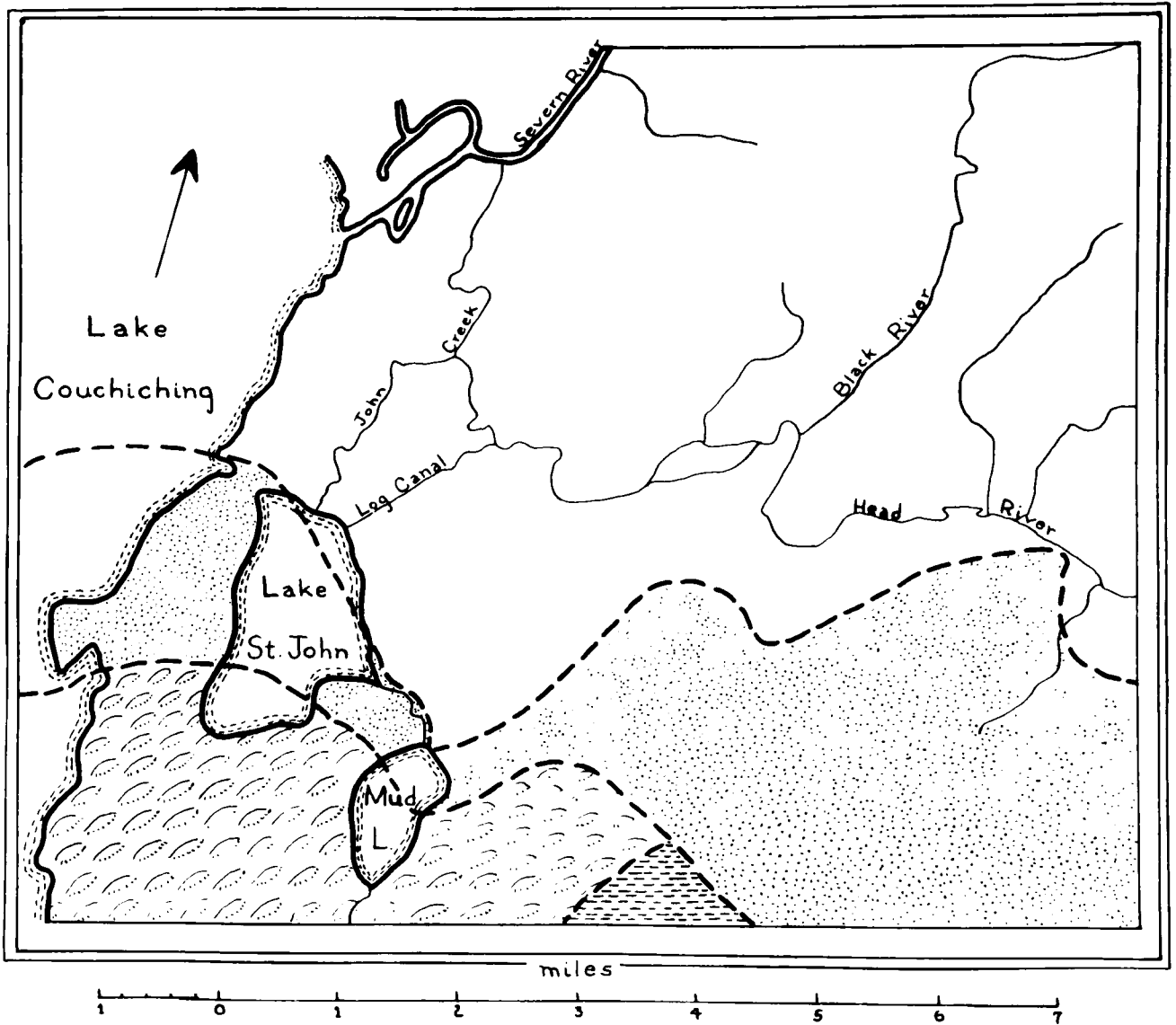
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<sup>1</sup>Putnam and Chapman: Physiography of South-Central Ontario.





# LAND TYPE

RAMA TOWNSHIP

AFTER R. E. DEANE



## LEGEND

- Rock-knob Lowlands — 
- Limestone Plains — 
- Algonquin Lake Plain — 
- Drumlinized Till Plain — 

(a) Rock-knob Lowlands

The rock-knob lowlands are the most northerly and most extensive sector of Rama Township, reaching southward for approximately four miles. Drift was thinly deposited due to the under-loaded ice. Later it was washed from the rock-knobs by Algonquin waters to the intervening lowlands, leaving outcroppings of the Shield exposed to weathering. Some sand, silt or clay was laid down by this glacial lake in isolated pockets. The old shoreline is evident east of Rama Township, so the area was completely submerged at one time. However, deposition was not on a larger scale and its effects are only evident in depressed hollows. The eastern portion of the rock-knob lowlands is marked by thin deposits of ground moraine which are glacial in origin. An outlyer of limestone is prominent in the north. Sand, which is largely a result of melt water deposition, recessional moraine and an important kame deposit north-east of Lake St. John at Fawkham which is related to these ridges and consists of an abundance of gravel. Material is taken from this deposit to re-surface township roads. Swamps are numerous throughout the lowland area, a result of poor drainage in the material beneath and seepage from surrounding heights. The muck is usually underlain by sand, grading down to silt and clay, and is of recent origin. All the important rivers and streams occur in this region and are in a youthful stage of development with V-shaped valleys and many rapids separated by slower quiet pools. The Black River is the most important. It flows westward from Cooper's Falls, flanked by rocky banks which are



No. 1 Granite knolls are numerous in the rock-knob lowlands, often providing difficulty in transportation.



No. 2 A granitic outcrop with scrub growth in the foreground reveals a common scene in the rock-knob lowlands.

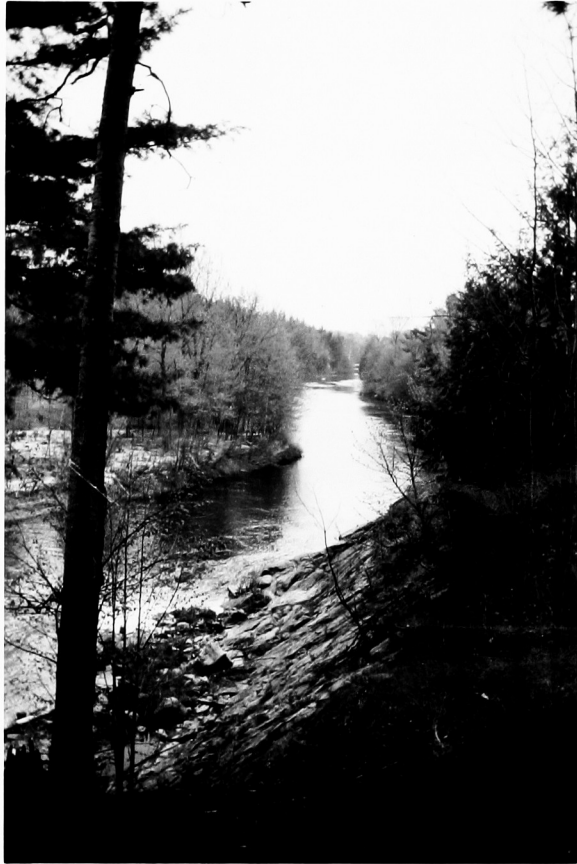




No. 3 The kame deposit at Fawkham yields gravel which is used to re-surface township roads.



No. 4 John Creek is the most mature river in the area marked by meanders and a flood plain. Note the clay banks.



No. 5    The youthful Black River has rocky shores with alternating rapids and smooth flowing waters.

steepest in the east. Its main tributary is the Head River. John Creek is the most mature river as it meanders occasionally and has the beginnings of a flood plain. However despite this varied surficial geology, the whole area is distinguished from the rest of Rama Township by its Pre-Cambrian outcrops and rugged character.

(b) Limestone Plains

A narrow band of limestone overlies the Canadian Shield and fringes its southern exposed border, dipping down into the south-east corner of Rama Township. As in the north, Algonquin waters washed the till into the lower areas where a thin accumulation of deposits resulted. Above these depressions rise escarpments from 3 to 25 feet high which may continue for 2 or 3 miles. They are the result of glacial plucking or quarrying. A long ridge of recessional moraine extends from just east of Lake St. John south-east through this section, marking the retreat of the glacial ice. At its northern limits, it reaches heights of 20 to 40 feet. Smaller ridges of recessional moraine exist here also, as do patches of ground moraine, sand of lacustrine origin and swamp. Lake St. John is a feature of this area. At a height of 717 feet above sea level, it is the lowest body of water in the vicinity into which the Black River drains via John Creek and the Log Canal. There is also a small stream connecting it with Mud Lake. The shore of Lake St. John is generally rocky. This whole area is characterized by the flat-lying limestone outcrops which predominate throughout the region.



No. 6 Limestone escarpments such as this are common in the limestone plains area. Notice the mullein growth and scattered boulders which are detrimental to constructive land use.



No. 7 The flat limestone plains are characterized by sumac and other low vegetation as well as by deep fissures, the result of water percolation causing the limestone to dissolve in solution.

(c) Algonquin Lake Plain

The Algonquin Lake Plain, reaching up from the south, covers a very small area of lower Rama Township. Here the glacial lake was deeper and made a more lasting impression upon the landscape. Clay flats occupy the depressed portions with silt and sand respectively covering areas which increase in height or are closer to the original shoreline. In many cases, the sediments are stratified in a vertical gradation of sand over silt over clay. The majority of this section is floored with varved clay, but where sand and silt have been eroded or were not deposited, weathering has destroyed the clay varving to a depth of 2 to 4 feet. This section is the smallest of the four land types, but is necessarily distinguished from the rest of the township by its flat and sandy nature.

(d) Drumlinized Till Plain

This area includes the south-western corner of Rama Township. The drumlins are long narrow ridges generally less than 50 feet high. Some have been modified by wave action from Lake Algonquin. Others are especially small where drift is thin. In some instances the swales between drumlins are covered with lacustrine deposits. In most cases, they are floored with ground moraine. There is some evidence of stratification of materials in certain of the drumlins which might indicate that the ridges are eskers which have been greatly modified by the last readvance of the glacier. In any case they indicate the general direction of the ice movement from the



north-east as they point south 30 degrees west. Mud Lake, at an elevation of 718 feet above sea level, is a major drainage feature. It is surrounded by bog except for a small clay area at the east, and becomes quite low and stagnant in the summer. The drumlinized till plain is a distinctive area in the township, unique due to its rolling topography.

(e) Lake Couchiching

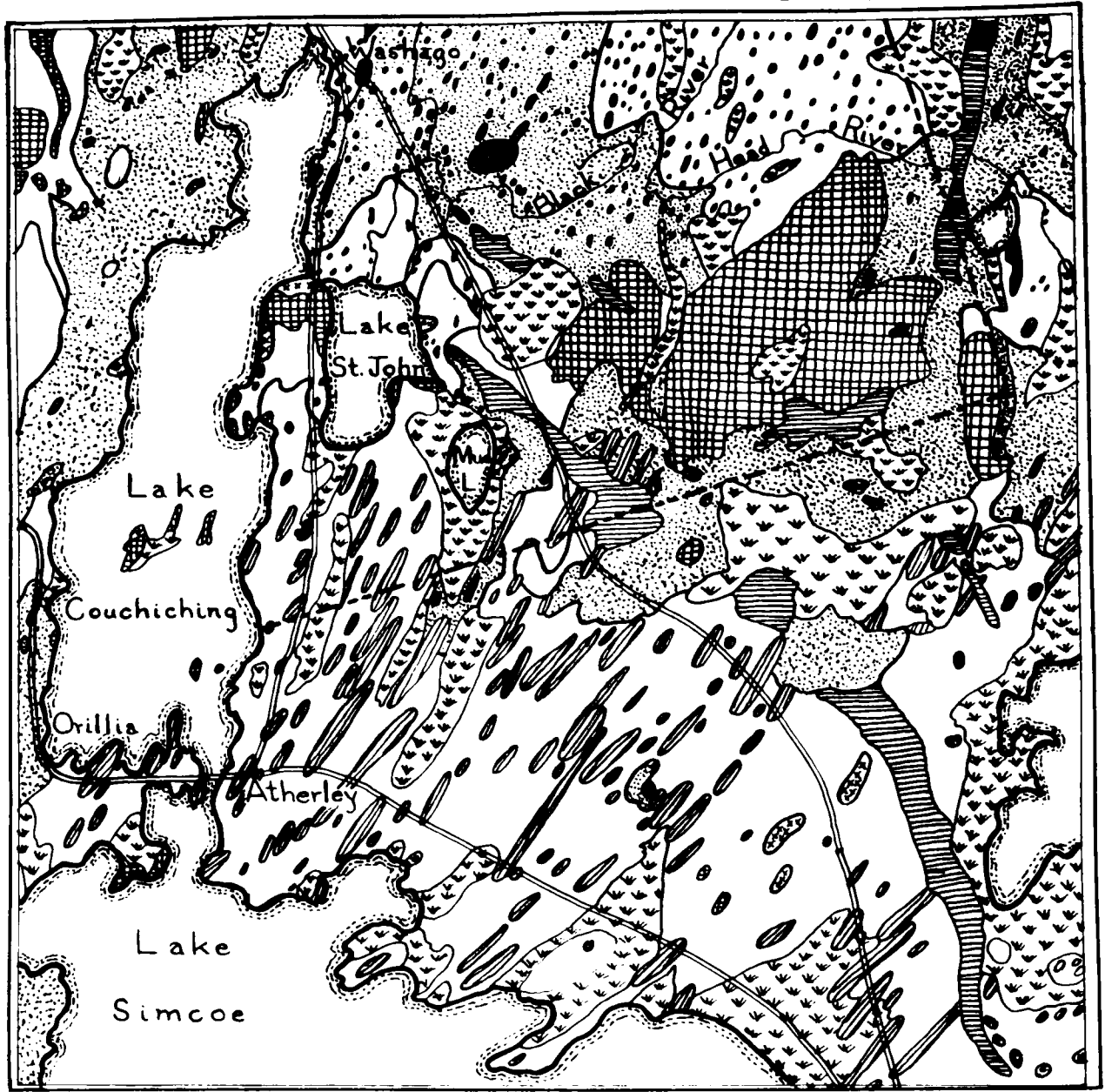
Lake Couchiching marks the western border of Rama Township. A line roughly dividing it in half separates Rama from Orillia Township to the west. This body of water is very shallow containing several islands and with rocks and shoals often dangerously close to the surface. Chiefs Island and Horse Island are the two most important included in Rama Township. The lake is 719 feet above sea level and is a northern extension of Lake Simcoe. It drains northward via the Severn River. The origin of Lake Couchiching is attributed to one of the following factors: (1) damming of pre-glacial drainage systems by glacial drift; (2) damming of outlets by lacustrine deposits; (3) depressions largely glacial in origin; (4) differential uplift. Both Lake Couchiching and Lake St. John lie in the transition zone between the Canadian Shield and the Paleozoic rocks.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>R.E. Deane: Pleistocene Geology of the Lake Simcoe Area, Ontario.

**SURFICIAL GEOLOGY**

after R. E. Deane



2 0 2 4 6 8

miles

**LEGEND****Quaternary - Recent**

Swamp (mainly muck)

**Pleistocene****Glacio-Lacustrine Deposits**

Sand

Clay

Beach sand and gravel

**Glacio-Fluvial Deposits**

Sand and gravel

**Glacial Deposits**

Ground moraine

Recessional moraine

Drumlin

**Bedrock Outcrops**

Palaeozoic (mainly limestone)

Precambrian (mainly granite and granite-gneiss)

C.N. railway

Rama Township

Rama Township lies in an area where two climatic regions meet. The northern section is a part of the Muskoka region which grades into the Simcoe and Kawartha Lakes section to the south. The Muskoka region has an extreme temperature range but in Rama Township this is modified by Lake Couchiching. The Simcoe and Kawartha region is differentiated from southern Ontario due to its colder winter and more backward spring. Also precipitation is lighter than the surrounding areas, but the climate is generally milder than in the Muskoka region to the north. The following table indicates the approximate conditions occurring in Rama Township.

Mean temperature in degrees Fahrenheit

Jan. - 16	Apr. - 40	July - 67	Oct. - 46
Feb. - 15	May - 54	Aug. - 64	Nov. - 34
Mar. - 24	June - 63	Sept. - 59	Dec. - 22

Annual - 42

Spring - 38	Summer - 65	Autumn - 46	Winter - 17
-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

These figures are especially valuable to the farmer. It is worthwhile for him to know that the annual mean daily range of temperature is 21 degrees Fahrenheit, while the lowest temperature on record is -45 degrees Fahrenheit, and the highest 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

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<sup>1</sup>Putnam and Chapman: Physiography of South-Central Ontario.

The average date for the beginning of the growing season is April 19 which lasts for approximately 189 days until October 22. The frost-free period lasts from 123 to 130 days from approximately May 20 to September 24. There is a mean annual rainfall of 33" and snowfall of 100". The average rainfall for the months April to September inclusive is 15" while the frequency of drought during this period is 15 days. Mean annual cloudiness is estimated at 50% of the time. The prevailing wind is from the north-west.

In the northern rock-knob lowlands a hardy type of growth persists with conifers and scrub growth dominating. To the south deciduous trees become the most important.

Today the north consists mainly of cedar, juniper, mullein and blueweed. Only the occasional white pine remains, grim reminder of the early days of abundance. The area was thoroughly cut-over in the nineteenth century. Fires have also caused destruction and damage. There are several tamarack and cedar swamps and on drier ground tangled scrub of second growth with a scattering of birch, alder, willow, spruce, and pine. Juniper and sumac are common while on pasture lands, bluegrass and mullein are abundant. There are several sandy and eroded areas, as in the section immediately west of Cooper's Falls, where reforestation is needed. West of Fawkham there is a small reforestation project while west of Ramola at the Junior Farmers Agricultural Society Hall, trees have been planted to act as a wind break on a sandy ridge. A more wide scale adoption of these practises could be employed in many parts of Rama Township.

In the south, maple, elm and hickory are the most abundant. They require deeper soils so a scattering is often found in clay pockets to the north. Woodlots are quite numerous in the southern section where maple sugaring is a local industry. These woodlots also provide a source for firewood. It is important that these small forested sections should be maintained or even increased. In cleared areas,





No. 8    Vegetation in the rock-knob lowlands is not abundant and is often lacking where rock outcrops persist.    Stumps, like those above, recall earlier days when the area was well forested.

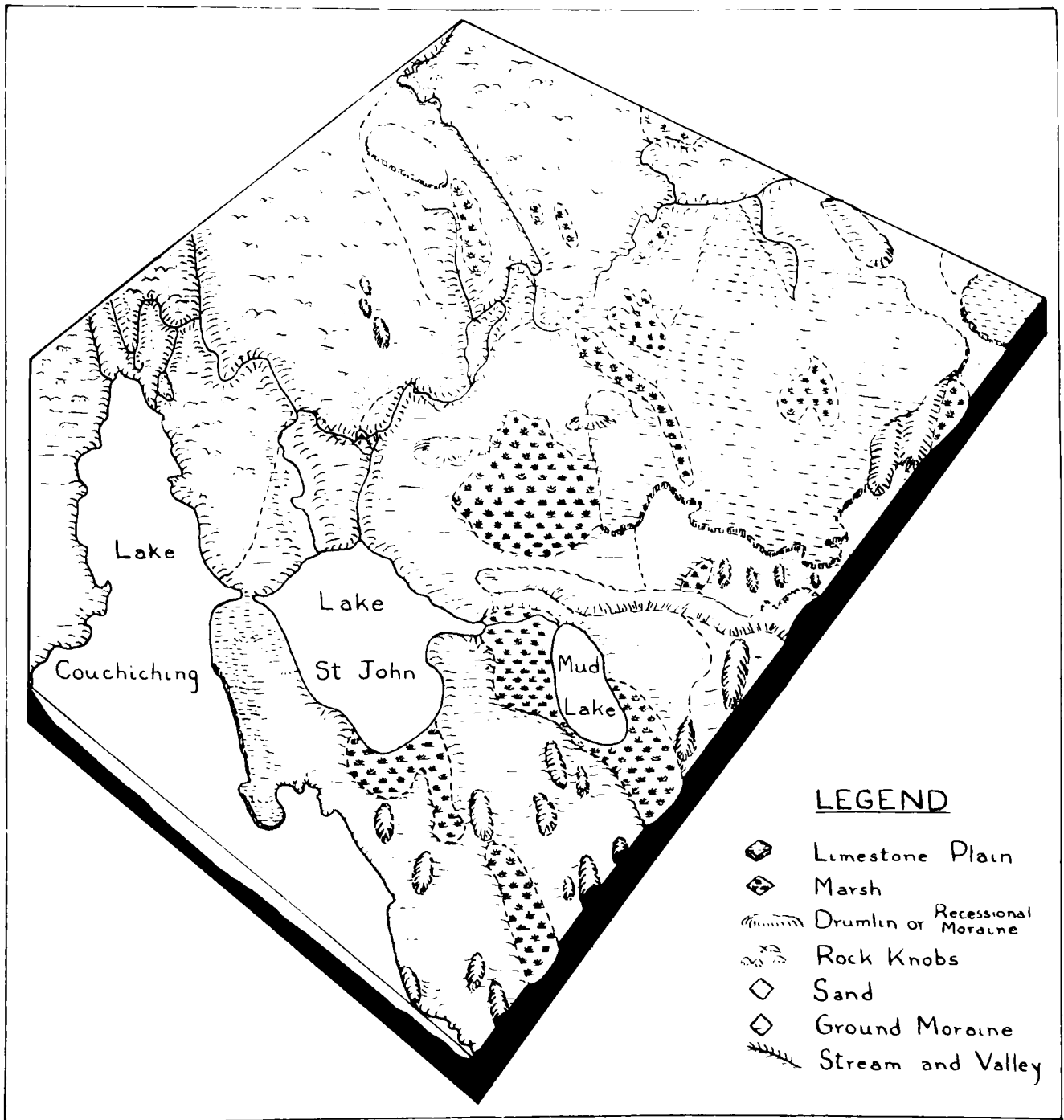


No. 9    A tamarack swamp in the rock-knob lowlands.

bluegrass and mullein are again common, although they are giving way to more of a variety of weeds such as the wild carrot, chicory, goldenrod, and thistle. Both sections have swampy ground of Recent origin in low-lying areas.

# RELIEF FEATURES

Plate 5



Soils in Rama Township are inclined to be shallow throughout the area. In the northern rock-knob lowlands, only isolated pockets are available for cultivation. In the southern area, the limestone plains are thinly covered, marked by much outcropping. The drumlinized till plain and Algonquin Lake plain have deeper soils.

The most dominant soil types are those developed on boulder-clay tills, sandy tills and sandy tills with moderate gravel. Deane took samples of each of these types of parent material and found the following results. The boulder-clay till has about an equal proportion of sand, silt and clay, with a small amount of gravel. A sample of grey-brown till from a low ridge of recessional moraine proved this to be true at four feet below the surface with 5% gravel, 37% sand, 35% silt, and 23% clay. Sandy tills have a moderate amount of silt with smaller quantities of clay and gravel as seen in the brown sandy till four feet below the highest surface of a drumlin. In this case there was 3% gravel, 50% sand, 39% silt, and 8% clay. Sandy tills with moderate gravel have a slightly higher gravel content with clay the minor constituent. In the loose brown sandy till of ground moraine 4 feet below the surface there was found to be 18% gravel, 45% sand, 25% silt and 11 % clay.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the loose till in the rock-knob lowlands is reddish in color and sandy, derived from the granite bedrock. This may be

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<sup>1</sup>R.E. Deane: Pleistocene Geology of the Lake Simcoe Area, Ontario.

classed as a very light loam. Boulder clay or hard sandy till predominates. There is an important deficiency of phosphorous in this area, averaging 15 to 50 pounds per acre. The limestone plains are also thinly covered with ground moraine which is a sandy till with a moderate amount of gravel. The phosphorous content is higher here than in the north but still relatively low at 75 pounds per acre. The Algonquin Lake Plain has surface deposits of stratified clay, sand and silt. Some sandy soils and others developed on boulder-clay tills are found on the drumlins of south-western Rama Township while between them lacustrine deposits are often evident.<sup>1</sup> Thus, although soils are generally shallow, there are small areas where deeper soils occur and in these areas a basis for agriculture is provided.

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<sup>1</sup>Putnam and Chapman: Physiography of South-Central Ontario.



No. 10 A sandy section west of Cooper's Falls indicates the need for reforestation.



No. 11 A small pocket of ground moraine is often sufficient to farm. The stump fence is a silent reminder of pioneering days and a former white pine forest.



In recent years as the population of Rama Township has increased, the abundance of wild life has decreased. In earlier days, settlers found bear, wolf and many of the northern bush animals. Only a few stray individuals of this type are seen today although smaller beasts such as fox, rabbit, racoon, porcupine, muskrat, and even the occasional deer are quite common. There are still all types of fish in the rivers and lakes although their number has decreased. The most common are bass (black, largemouth and rock) pike, pickerel, muskies, carp, sunfish, perch, channel cat, and a smaller quantity of trout. Bird life is abundant since the area serves as a nesting ground for many summer varieties. Water fowl seek seclusion in the lakes in the spring and fall during their migratory flights. The animal life of Rama should be encouraged and protected to aid in the tourist industry.

## Part II

### HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

#### Chapter 1

#### History<sup>1</sup>

The first settlers of Rama Township were squatters who made use of the natural resources of the area for their own benefit. Before long, three separate surveys were made by the government. One was in the western section along the lakeshore, another from the county road west to the first survey, and the last in the remaining half of the township to the east. In 1835, lot 1 to 22 of the lake front was surveyed as was the area west of the county road. East of there was marked as "Large Tamarack Swamp." At this time, the limestone quarry on the Geneva Park peninsula, was indicated on the map. In 1855, parts of the inaccessible east were surveyed around the Black and Head Rivers. In 1860, the northern section was surveyed more thoroughly by ten men from Toronto including two chainmen and four axemen. Such detail as rapids, a beaver dam, store camps and Rattlesnake Island were named. It was urged that the land survey in the Black River Valley be completed and settlement begun. Rama Island was also surveyed and it was recommended that the southern section be settled, while the northern and southern extremities would be good mill sites.

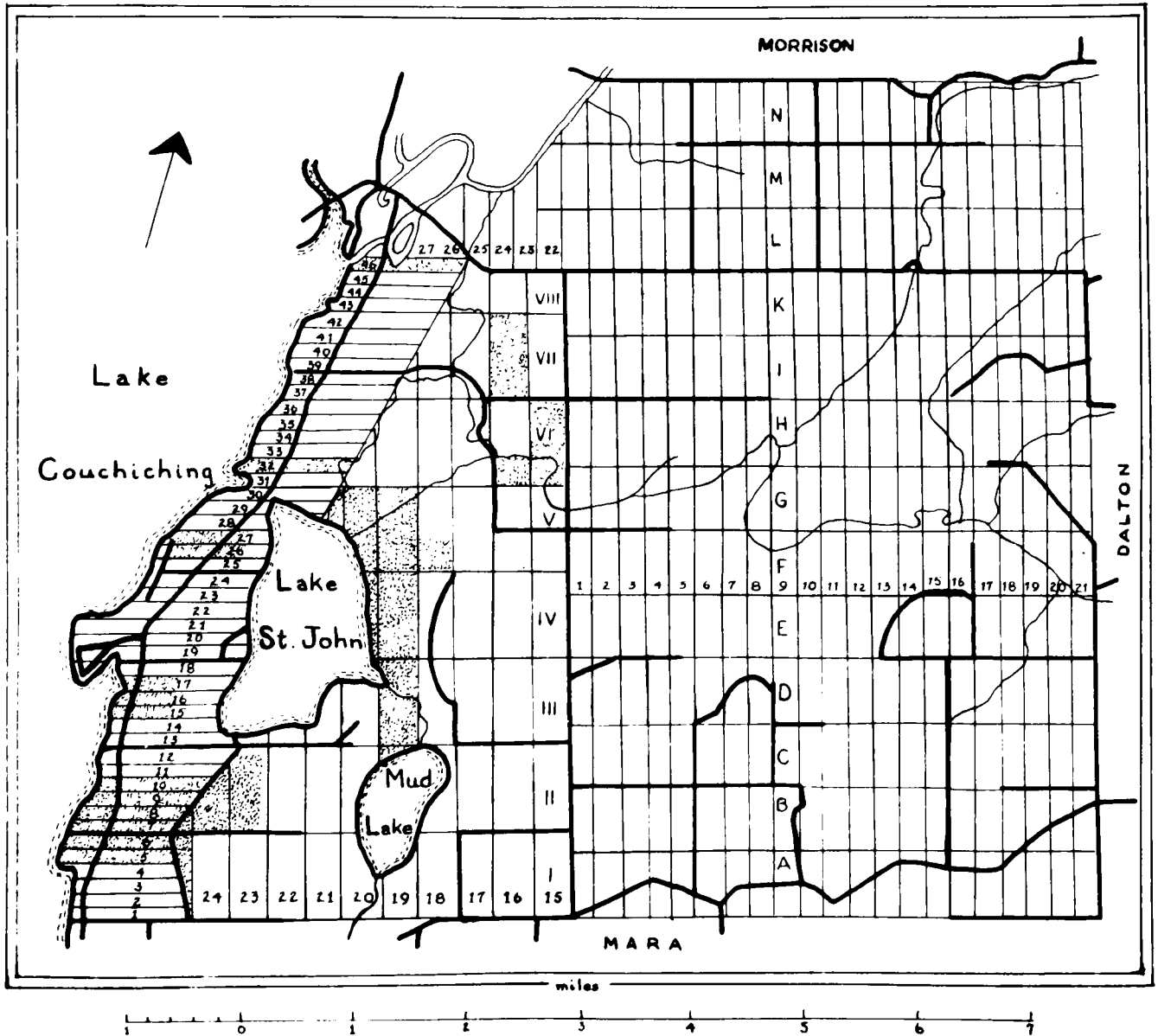
As Yonge Street was extended northwards and the railway reached Barrie, pioneers began to move up the shores of Lake Simcoe

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<sup>1</sup>From Records of the Ontario Parliament Building, Toronto; and residents of Rama Township.

# SURVEYS OF RAMA TOWNSHIP

Plate 6



## LEGEND

- Survey lines
- Road or Road Allowance
- Indian Reservation

to Lake Couchiching and then inland. A steamer served the early settlers but as railways reached up both sides of Lake Couchiching, it became a means for excursions. By 1935 it had ceased operating.

The first settlers were A.T. Cooper with his wife and three children who originated from England and in 1864 made their way by railway to Barrie, by water to Washago, and by foot inland. They eventually settled at the site of the present Cooper's Falls. In 1876 there was a general store and post office, blacksmith's shop and several houses as settlers had filtered into the Cooper's Falls area. There were no communications built up and the nearest supply point was the Severn Bridge. Through Sir John A. MacDonald's efforts, colonization was furthered along the town line from the Severn River eastwards.

By 1879, there were post offices established at Fawkham, Seabright, Longford Mills, Rama, Fawn, and Cooper's Falls and schools at Fawkham, Seabright, Longford Mills, and Rama. At this time forestry was the major activity. White pine was the most important timber, cut in cubic foot squares and logs. Mills were quite numerous, the most important located on the Severn River, at Cooper's Falls, and Longford Mills on Lake St. John. Logs were brought to these mills down the Black and Head Rivers. Some were guided to the Log Canal joining the Black River to Lake St. John. There they were transported across the northern end to the Portage, and dragged across this narrow bridge of land from the north-west corner of Lake St. John to Lake Couchiching, usually by horse and chain. Then booms

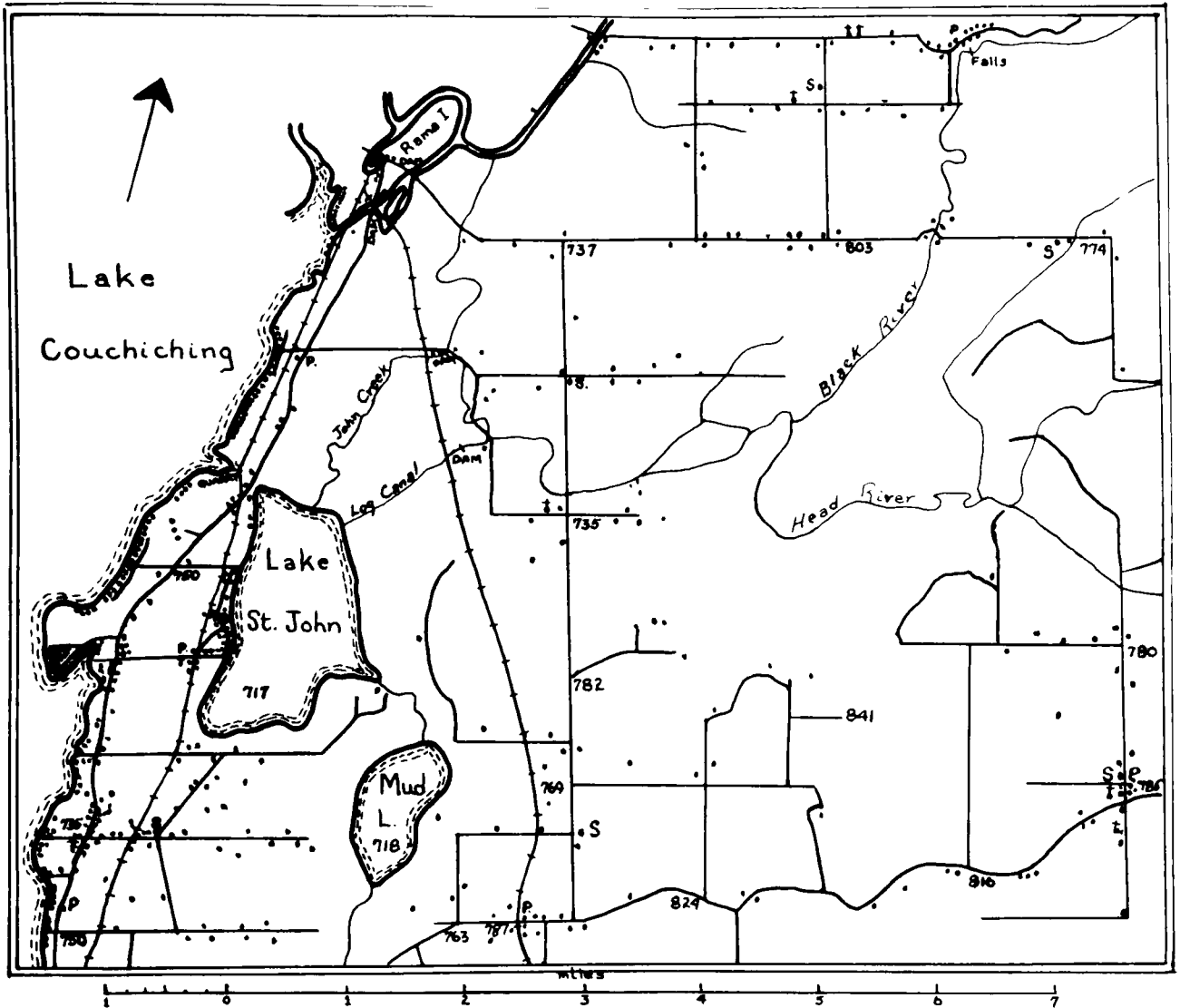
went down into Lake Simcoe and reached Barrie where the logs were shipped by rail to Montreal. Here they were manufactured into masts and sent to London, England, either as masts or as logs. White pine proved to be the best timber for masts, so the depletion of this tree was swift. By 1935, all logging operations had ceased.

In early times, the Indians each had their own trap lines. Hunting and trapping was very prosperous with deer, rat, mink, muskrat, otter, fox, and bear prevalent. Since beaver were few in number, they were protected. As the number of settlers increased however, the game and Indians were forced north and eastwards.

So lumbering and hunting declined, while farming gained importance in the cleared sections. Electricity reached the most inaccessible areas by 1941. Roads improved, settlements grew and the tourist industry increased tremendously after 1935. A chemical plant was established at Longford Mills, the only industry of this type in the township. Although farming and the tourist industry have become important in recent years, it should be pointed out that forest growth and animal life was once the basis of existence in Rama Township. Therefore it seems reasonable to suggest that these two industries should not be neglected in the future. In this way the economy of the township would become more balanced, and be in closer harmony with the physical environment.

# SETTLEMENT

Plate 7



## LEGEND

- Building
- P Post Office
- S School
- † Church
- 841 Height in foot

In the whole of Rama Township, except for the Indian Reservation, there are 34,354 acres of land. Of this total, 8,982 acres are cleared land, 1,916 acres are woodland, 21,575 acres are waste land, and 1,880 slash land. The land is worth approximately \$2.00 per acre. Land and buildings bring an income of about \$409,925.00 to the township. Almost one half of this total is due to the tourist trade. Thus the importance of recreational land use is evident. A large fraction of this total income is also related to agricultural production.

Agriculture is limited in Rama Township by the generally thin soils, often with too great a content of gravel or sand for high quality crops. However the grazing of livestock and the practice of forestry have proved to be the best use for the land. For this reason, these practises should be continued and in some cases increased.

The boulder-clay and hard sandy till which characterizes the rock-knob lowlands contributes to the dominant agricultural practice, that of grazing milk cattle. Large sections of poorer ground are set aside as ranch lands. Livestock graze on areas where outcrops and boulders are less prevalent. Beef cattle and some sheep are also kept, as are chickens and other animals for home use. Crops are mostly mixed grain with an emphasis on oats and hay grown on segregated stretches of clay. Some fall wheat, potatoes, and vegetables are





No. 12    Grazing is one of the chief agricultural land use practises in the rock-knob lowlands where ground moraine provides land suitable for pasture.



No. 13    The flood plain of John Creek affords fertile soil for this farm located in the rock-knob lowlands.



No. 14      This mosaic shows an area in the rock-knob  
             lowlands where the problems of granite out-  
             crops and thin soils are of prime importance  
                                 to the farmer.

also grown in smaller quantity. The average size farm in this region is 200 acres ranging from 100 to 500 acres per farm. All contain fairly high percentage of waste land and woodlot. Pasture and forestry are the most satisfactory types of land use.

The limestone plains are inclined to be stony and soils are developed on sandy tills. This again permits grazing to be the best land use practice. The stone fences are a good indication of the nature of the parent materials. Canada bluegrass and Dutch clover provide pasture. Where soils are deeper, hay, grain, and corn are grown. Oats and wheat are the primary grain crops used. Livestock are mainly milk cattle though there are some beef cattle and sheep kept as well. There are also quite large chicken farms in this section. Two hundred acres is the average sized farm with once again a sizable amount of woodlot and swamp.

The small area distinguished as Algonquin Lake Plain is of stratified clay, sand and silt. Thus general farming is the most favourable land use. Comparatively intensive farming can be carried on in this area with a concentration of higher quality crops and better livestock. The limited area in this land type category in Rama Township does not allow more study than this brief generalization.

The sandy soils and boulder-clay tills of the drumlinized till plain makes for the best agricultural land use in the township.



No. 15 Limestone plains are often so exposed that attempts to pasture the area or erect fence posts are not worth the added effort.



No. 16 Farms in the drumlinized till plain area are better adapted to general farming and are usually more prosperous.

General farming is the chief agricultural practice with crops of winter wheat, alfalfa, oats, barley, clover, roots and fodder corn being the most common ones. Farms are slightly smaller in this sector and are generally more prosperous.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the township chickens are well suited to the area, but turkeys which were once raised in Rama Township might very well be introduced again. Also it seems that there could be an increase in sheep raising. Beef cattle are well suited to the land. Many farms are called ranches because scores of acres are turned over in the cattle for the whole summer. These sections are usually in the more inaccessible interior of the township which is owned by the farmer in addition to his farm and separated from it. Milk cattle are especially worthwhile since the demand for fluid milk is particularly great in the summer. A large amount of milk is shipped to Toronto, where the demand is greatest. Orillia requires a large fraction also, with Lindsay and Eldon of lesser importance. Crops are mainly for local or home use, as are any further livestock. Farms average 200 acres throughout the township. The poorer quality of land calls for extensive farming methods and therefore a 200 acre farm is not of exceptional size. The assessed value of farms varies from \$95.00 to \$4,900.00, indicating not only differences in the size, but also in the quality of farms.

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<sup>1</sup>Putnam and Chapman: Physiography of South-Central Ontario.

A farm typical of Rama Township is that belonging to MacDonald in the northern rock-knob lowlands. His farm is situated on a high piece of ground where moraine has collected and thickened. He owns 100 acres, 40 of which are in crops, mainly oats. There is bush, two acres of limestone scarp and pasture lands. A 12 foot well provides him with his water supply. He owns 40 to 50 head of cattle, some of which graze on the 200 acres of ranch land which he owns in the interior of the township. Milk is shipped to Lindsay. There are also a few chickens and other small animals for home use.

From this brief outline it is evident that where soils are thin, pasture or forestry is the best use to which the land may be put while in areas where the soil is deeper, general farming with an emphasis on the more hardy crops is the custom. It is also evident that capital will be needed if Rama Township is to develop its agricultural land use more fully.



No. 17 MacDonald has established a successful farm in an area where ground moraine is more abundant.



No. 18 This old pioneer home was deserted when the struggle against adverse environmental conditions and perhaps lack of capital caused defeat. Notice the rock piles along the fence line, a good indication of the nature of the soil.

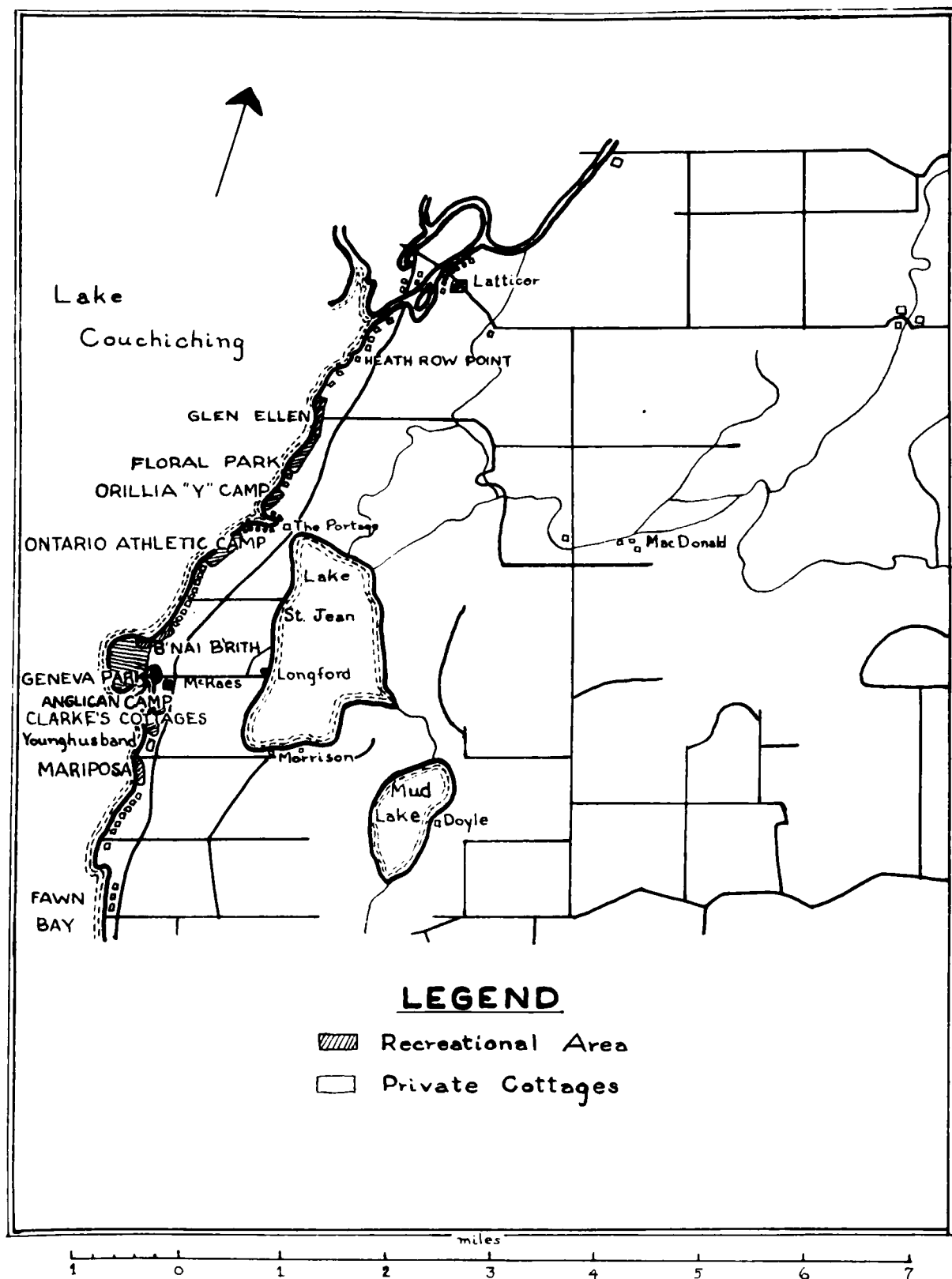
Recreational land use is concentrated along the lake front with scattered cottages on the river banks or by Lake St. John and Mud Lake. There are both private cottages and areas set aside for camps or other recreational uses. This area has many features which have stimulated the development of the recreational industry. These include proximity to Toronto and other urban centres, a favourable summer climate, coniferous forest, wild life, fishing and bathing. There is little winter recreation since the flat nature of the land does not encourage skiing or sledding. However, fishing through the ice and skating on the lake are both practised by residents of the area. These sports could be developed to attract vacationers to a scenic winter area as well. Highway #69 is a good gravel road and provides easy accessibility to the area. As some holiday seekers became established, a greater number were attracted until before long there was hardly a vacant lot facing Lake Couchiching. Beginning from the north end of the lake, I shall trace recreational land use along its shores.

(a) From the Severn River to Heath Row Point

This location is marked by several nicely kept cottages, well spaced due to the rugged surroundings. The area was first developed thirty years ago. It is convenient to Washago, the nearest population centre. There is an abundance of granite outcrop, with pine and beech forest. The shores are rocky with a gradual dip to the water. There is quite dense woodland immediately surrounding the buildings, with an occasional clearing for a garden or small lawn,



# AREAS OF RECREATION



and bare rock outcrop where blueberries are abundant. One cottage serves as an example of those in the northern section of Rama Township. An elderly Torontonion has winterized his home and has lived there permanently for the past three years. He has cleared away undergrowth and developed a vegetable garden in a good pocket of soil. He owns his home, valued at \$6,000.00 with hydro and water mains but no sewage. The lot immediately north of his was Indian reservation but is now held by the government, and can not be purchased. So it remains vacant as do several small rocky islands off the shore. This area is best suited for individual cottages in a picturesque setting since physical conditions do not permit a large settlement.

(b) Heath Row Point

On this land peninsula, rock again dominates the landscape with a prosperous growth of birch and aspen. Three cottages are haphazardly situated on the point according to their setting. The first recreational land use was begun here ten years ago. There is now a stable population. The people are from Toronto and own their cottages, although they may rent or loan them for part of the summer. The buildings are small and average values are \$2,000.00. Hydro is provided but no water mains or sewage is available. The immediate surroundings of each cottage is rocky and forested. The shore line is rocky but the water is shallow for some distance out. Fishing and swimming are the main activities. Washago is the nearest urban and supply centre. Heath Row Point may be considered the most rugged cottage area along the shores of Lake Couchiching.

(c) Glen Ellen and Floral Park

Glen Ellen is a subdivision of the Floral Park recreational area and although operated separately from it, is dependent on it in many ways. The area spreads through open woodland with 20 to 30 cottages, an unreliable number since building is continuing very quickly. To the north three-quarters of a mile of lakeshore is uninhabited, although it is expected that it will be built up soon. Glen Ellen is established more recently than Floral Park in its present form, although several cottages have been there for longer. Lots have 100 foot frontage and more, with a good road back of them to allow easy accessibility to highway #69. Cottages are valued at \$1,500.00 to \$2,500.00 and have hydro and water mains but no sewage facilities. Many cottages are now owned but the present plan is for new cottages to be rented only. The people come from Toronto and Hamilton mostly with a few representatives from smaller centres and the United States. The season continues from June to October. A good community spirit exists since there is a community hall and activities such as a regatta organized by the rate payers. The birch, oak and beech trees are numerous and make a pleasant setting for the cottages. A small sand beach is an attraction and swimming, fishing, boating and community living are all conducive to the development of the recreational industry.

There is no visible break between Glen Ellen and Floral Park. However, the latter is a larger area, first settled for recreational



No. 19 Cottages along the Lake Couchiching shore at Floral Park are numerous and of a moderate size. The problem of over-crowding is becoming evident.

purposes 22 years ago and now has about 85 cottages, and many new ones under construction. This area is more open with scattered trees of aspen, birch, willow and cedar. Docks and wharfs are numerous and swimming is good. There are a few sand beaches in this area. In the north the cottages are backed by open fields while further south there are woodlots or farmer's fields flanking the settlement. This area is quite crowded with 50 foot lots. Cottages are valued at \$2,000.00 to \$5,000.00, over one-half of which are owned and the remainder rented. Some small cabins are rented out by cottagers and a co-operative lodge has been run for 3 years. Hydro and water mains are provided but no sewage, People come from all of Ontario and parts of the United States. The fact that the majority do return every year is a good indication that there is a strong community spirit in this particular camp. Cottagers have formed a Floral Park Association and recently there has also been organized a Young People's Association. Baseball, euchre, cribbage, bingo, dancing, stunt nights and a regatta are some of the activities provided. Cottagers from Glen Ellen take advantage of these facilities which include as well a general store (with gas pump), post office, and a souvenir and snack bar. Although this is one of the most successful recreational areas for community living, there is a need for alleviating the crowded conditions.

(d) Floral Park to Orillia Y.M.C.A. Camp

A small private section exists here with 10 to 12 cottages valued at about \$5,000.00 to \$8,000.00. It is a wooded area with a stoney beach marked by a few sandy sections. Most have their own garden plots for vegetables and flowers. Hydro and water mains are provided but no sewage exists. The inhabitants own their cottages, are from Toronto mostly, and return each summer, also coming on weekends during the spring and fall. There is no organized community life and they are quite isolated from other recreational areas. Longford Mills is the nearest community (other than Floral Park). It is a good area for quiet holidays and pleasant for those with small children.

(e) Orillia Y.M.C.A. Camp

This camp is sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. in Orillia. It is situated in a woods on a rocky shore line. Cabins and tents provide shelter. There is good swimming with a raft and diving board, but there is no adequate beach. A regular Y.M.C.A. program is followed, in the out-of-doors so that the children of the district may experience a few weeks of healthy recreation and community living. The setting makes for a camp which demands "roughing it" more than any other in the township.

(f) The Portage

A farm called "The Portage" is situated with its buildings on Highway #69 at the narrowest land crossing between Lake St. John and Couchiching. General farming including sheep raising, is practised on the 200 acres. The farm house has rooms in which the friends or family of the owner are able to stay for a holiday. This vacation spot is not commercially advertised, but rather spoken of between friends and has become popular in that way so that the clientele is limited. These people keep kennels and a good sized garden which provides fresh vegetables. The owner is originally from Toronto and most guests come from that city also. The farm is situated on the border of the geologic formation of limestone plains and granite lowlands. It is an historical spot and one of the earliest settled areas. Thus it provides an interesting setting which offers many attractions to the holidayer.

(g) The Portage to the Ontario Athletic Camp

A row of about 15 cottages line the small bay along the road leading to the Ontario Athletic Camp. They each have their own garden and lawn with a 50 foot lake frontage. They are privately owned with most vacationers originating from Toronto and vicinity. Boating, swimming and fishing are the most popular sports. There are no organized community activities but cottages are close enough that a neighbourly atmosphere exists. Longford Mills and Floral Park are supply centres for the people. Limestone outcrops with scrub growth and a lack of large trees mean that this section is not particularly scenic.

(h) The Ontario Athletic Camp

This camp is a unique and successful experiment, situated on Lake Couchiching at the base of a limestone scarp. There are many open fields with several sheltered wooded sections. It is a provincial camp operated by the Physical and Health Education Branch of the Department of Education of the Province of Ontario. The camp site was purchased in the early 1920's by the Ontario Athletic Commission. Until 1939, it was used to train track and field athletes who had won district meets throughout the province. From 1939 to 1945, it became a Teacher Training Camp specializing in Defense Training. In 1946 it was used for an experimental camping program and in 1947 its operation came under the control of the Department of Education. Its aim is "to develop qualities of leadership in selected secondary school pupils by means of an athletic leadership training course".<sup>1</sup> No registration fee is required. Four courses of 2 weeks each are provided throughout the summer months. The course is limited to 100 to 200 participants. The campers are chosen, one from each secondary school, according to their academic standing, athletic ability, leadership, and usefulness in school. They must be at least 15 years of age. The sports offered are rugby, football, basketball, track and field, aquatics, archery, baseball, tennis, and volleyball. Also courses in fundamentals, coaching techniques, officiating, administration, practise teaching, and participation are given. Movies and other visual aids as well as a great deal of

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<sup>1</sup>Ontario Athletic Camp: Thesis by Ronald Hall and Kenneth Tulley.





No. 20     The cinder track and rugby field at the Ontario Athletic Camp are among the finest in this province.



No. 21     One of the many well kept buildings at the Ontario Athletic Camp. The site is particularly well suited for this type of recreation since it is flat lying on limestone plains with enough vegetation to provide shade and beauty.

equipment are available. There is also recreation distinct from sports such as music and campfire programs.

The camp has a lake frontage of 1407 feet. There are ten frame cabins of one storey which house ten campers. There is also a staff lodge, office, workshop, nurse's cabin, dining hall, director's lodge and kitchen staff cabin. Lovely lawns and impressive landscaping has made the site beautiful. It is also practical, with an archery range, two baseball diamonds, a grass basketball court, jumping pits and standards, 100 yard chutes, 3 volleyball courts, 3 tennis courts and a quarter mile cinder track around a regulation size football field. The track is the best in Ontario.

To this site many enthusiastic boys, girls, and teachers are brought and from it many leave as champions or more experienced athletes with memories of a happy and healthy summer. This is a specialized camp which has made a fairly successful use of the site for recreational purposes.

(i) From the Ontario Athletic Camp to B'nai B'rith

Privately owned cottages, many valued at \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00, are spread along the shore between B'nai B'rith and the Athletic Camp. These homes are mostly winterized and are usually two storeys surrounded by beautiful gardens and lawns which dip over the limestone scarp to the lakeshore below. Each have their own boathouse and dock with an average lake frontage of 100 feet. People come from

all over Ontario and the United States. There is no noticeable homogeneity between the residents. This is the most prosperous section of privately-owned cottages which are well established on a picturesque slope.

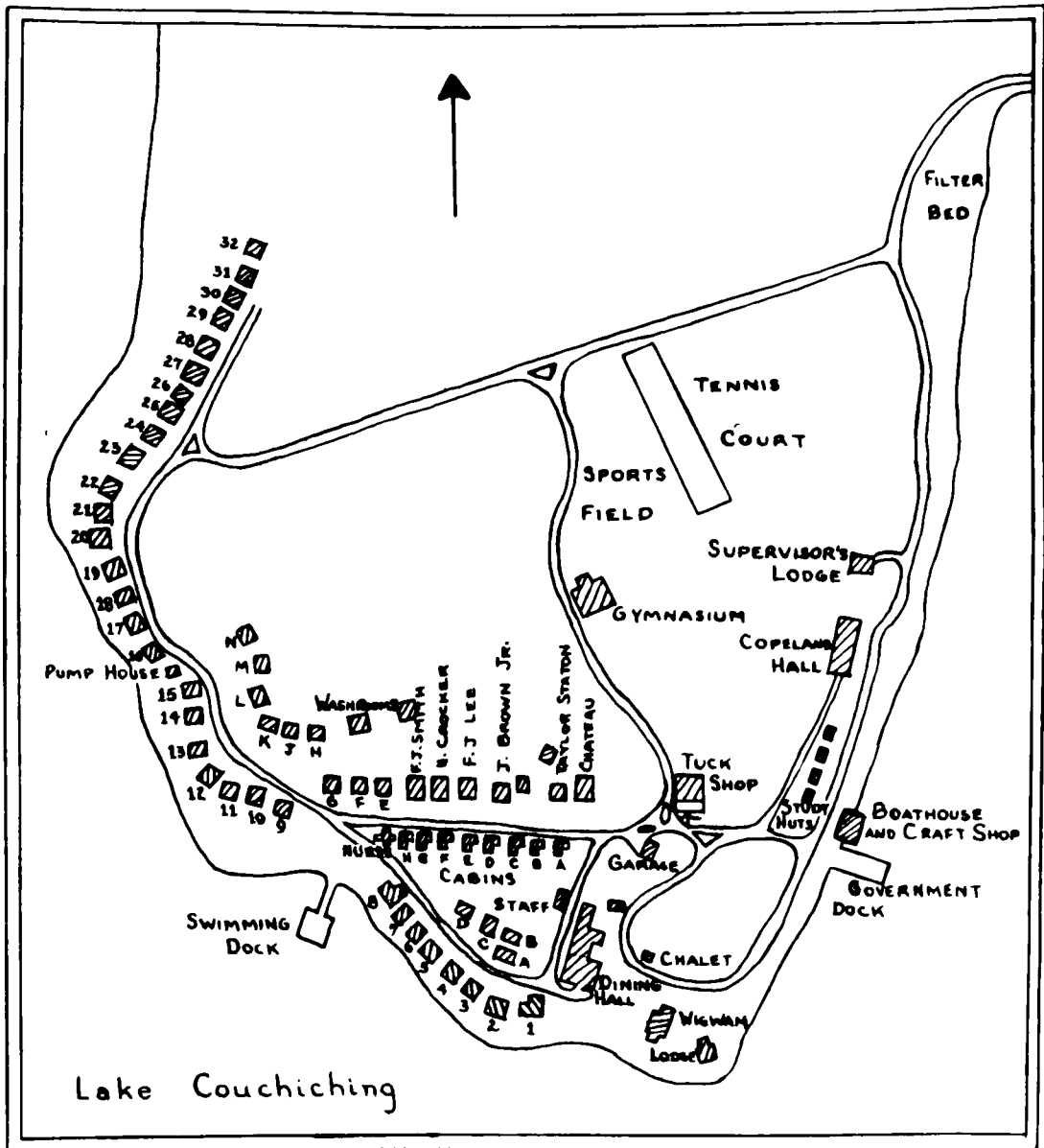
(j) B'nai B'rith Camp

B'nai B'rith (Sons of the Covenant) is a Jewish camp for children of Toronto and vicinity from 7 to 15 years of age. Approximately 130 boys or girls spend 3 weeks of the summer here under the guidance of 35 junior and senior staff members. The camp timetable is democratically decided upon by the campers. Crafts, dramatics, first aid, sports, hiking, boating and many other activities are also provided.

The site is very favourable since the camp is sheltered by a wooded area to the east and south, and by the calm waters of a bay to the west. This makes for a picturesque setting on the flat limestone plain. There are cabins holding six campers and one leader, as well as the dining hall, gym, hospital, and arts and crafts shop. Sports or camp fires are not neglected in the spacious open area belonging to the camp. It is well organized regarding camp program and the camp offers a healthy and worthwhile experience for many city children.

# GENEVA PARK

survey by Richard W. Becker



1 0 1 2 3

Scale :- 1" : 440'

(k) Geneva Park

There are 120 acres on the promontory of land known as Geneva Park which juts into Lake Couchiching. Two miles of scenic waterfront and a wide variety of wooded land and open fields on a limestone bedrock characterizes this ideal camp site. The camp is operated by the National Council of the Y.M.C.A's of Canada and serves as a young adult and family camp as well as a conference centre. It is situated nine miles from Orillia by road and includes two wharfs and 70 buildings. Thirty-two frame cottages face the lake front while nine more are further back, along with seven smaller cabins. There is also room accommodation in ten larger living units usually used for individuals either on vacation or at a conference. There is a home for the man in charge of maintenance which contains extra rooms for boarders when necessary. Four study huts are provided in which conference members may meet for discussions or in which they may work individually if desired. These also may be used as living units if necessary. There is a boathouse which houses the craft shop below and a piano and ping-pong table above; Copeland Hall which serves as a church, auditorium, and recreation centre; the gymnasium for sports and dancing with men's staff quarters above; the Tuck Shop and Office which is the camp's social centre; the Dining Hall and kitchen; and cabins for the remaining staff members. All the conveniences including hydro, water mains and sewage are present.



No. 22     The Tuck Shop at Geneva Park, social centre and office of this recreational area.



No. 23

The Lodge is one of the numerous living units provided at Geneva Park.

These winter scenes show that beauty is available in Rama Township in the colder months also. Recreation could be developed to advantage in this season.

The camp site itself is very old, at one time being a private area with a large summer home. In 1915 a wharf was built at which the lake steamer docked. Copeland Hall was used for roller skating and the whole area was a park or public recreation area before the Y.M.C.A. began operating it in 1910. In 1948, the camp program was renovated for improvement and took on its present form.

Cottages are rented by the week to family groups in which there must be at least two children. Most cottages are kept for two weeks or a month and each family gets first preference to return the following summer. Individuals wishing to have a vacation, live in the larger units and must be over 18 years of age. The program encourages young adults and for 5 weeks of the summer, a young adult camp is held for city workers who have only 1 or 2 weeks vacation. The remaining weeks are devoted to Conference groups who carry on their own study program but may make use of any of the facilities or staff provided by the Park. In the summer of 1950, a variety of groups were represented, such as the Luther League, the Canadian Institute on Public Affairs, the Ontario Junior Farmers Leadership Training Camp and many others. This centre may well be considered national, as seen by the wide representation from Canada, United States and abroad. A total of 1746 people spent some part of the summer of 1949 at Geneva Park. Of this total nearly half came from the Toronto area. Approximately

a quarter represented other areas within Ontario. The remaining one-quarter came from the rest of Canada, 24 States of the United States and nine other countries.

This area is especially suited to family groups. A safe beach for the smaller children with lots of space for older children's play and a program adapted to all ages is most conducive. Young adults find the camp especially suitable due to its locality. It is near centres of population so that for weekends a visit to the Park is easily arranged. Conference groups find all facilities which they need for study as well as a recreational program. Except for the accessibility there are no particular advantages in the natural setting of the Park for this group.

A Staff of 52 is maintained during the summer, four of whom are permanent. Crafts, swimming, canoeing, archery, music, nursery school and nature lore are available to everyone at the Park. Special program activities such as weiner roasts or regattas are also arranged.

The Y.M.C.A. has made the most of this environment. In no other area in Rama Township is there such a healthy camp, both physically and mentally. For all who attend Geneva Park there is experienced an education of community living, co-operation and understanding so necessary to-day.



(1) The Anglican Camp

This area at one time belonged to Geneva Park but is now operated by the Anglican Church. It provides a ten day or two week holiday for young people of the Toronto area. The camp site is open woods with cleared areas for sports. A large new dining hall, cabins and tents are the major dwellings. This camp does not differ from the average and thus may be said to serve its purpose for a specific group, adding one more adaptation to the recreational land use of Rama Township.

(m) From the Anglican Camp to Fawn Bay

McRae's service station and cabins are located on highway #69. This small section faces the lake and so provides a restful setting for overnight tourists or weekend guests. Some visitors may be an overflow from Geneva Park or other recreational areas which can not provide lodging. The clientele are mainly transient and thus not especially stable.

J.L. Younghusband owns several winterized log cottages on the Couchiching shores. Although this summer home is not the most spectacular, it belongs to the wealthiest holiday seeker in the region. Rather than having a real interest in this spot, Younghusband finds that it serves as a centre for fishing and hunting trips or a retreat when time permits, which is not very often.



No. 24 This country road leads from Highway #69 to Mariposa. To the left are lawns, cottages, and Lake Couchiching. On the right beyond the hedge row are farm lands.



No. 25 A winterized cottage at Fawn Bay. These homes are inhabited the greater part of the year. The grounds are well kept and add to the beauty of the site.

Clarke's cottages and Mariposa are two recreational areas which are owned by one person, divided into lots and rented out. Clarke built his own cottages and rents them. Mariposa consists of 8 cottages in open woodland. These areas are small and private with no organized community life, but a certain amount of homogeneity due to the single ownership.

Privately owned cottages fill the remaining area. They are all well-kept and of high value, many being winterized. In some spots there is a rather poor gravel beach. The land is open, marked by shade trees, lawns and gardens. Most cottagers are from Toronto and vicinity with a few from the States including Ohio and New York. A large portion of the year is spent in these permanent-type homes. The setting provides relaxation rather than sports or summer activities which are of secondary importance. All conveniences are available and Orillia is the principle supply centre. The cottages at Fawn Bay are especially prosperous. Land was first bought from the farmers about 25 years ago and now all but the occasional small section next to the water is used for recreational land use. These few remaining sections are kept by the farmers so that livestock may be watered at the lake.

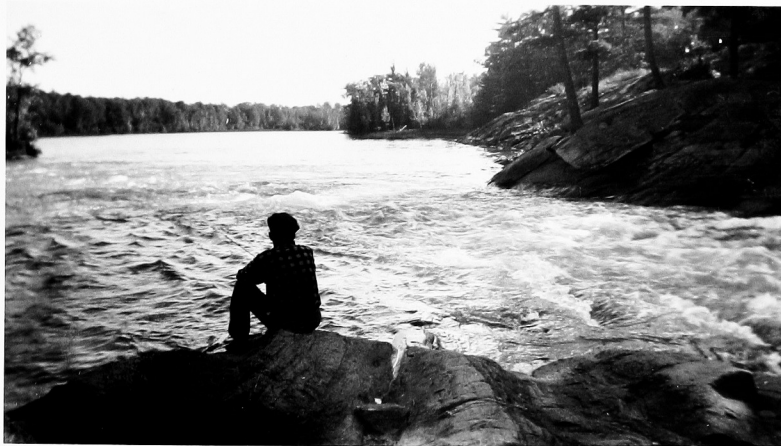
(n) Inland Recreational Areas

Land bordering Lake Couchiching accounts for most of the recreational areas in Rama Township. Northern areas are more rugged and best adapted to private cottages for those wishing summer sports and solitude. To the south, more open and level landscape allow

camp and more prosperous summer homes to be the most suitable recreational land use. However there are also areas in the interior where individual cottages are established. These are the most isolated in the township.

The Severn River provides a good site for many fishing enthusiasts. Open woods of birch and oak are prevalent with rock outcrops common. The water is green and very deep immediately offshore. There is no beach and the presence of currents do not encourage swimming as a major activity. Boating and fishing are more important. Cottages are valued at approximately \$5,000.00 and hydro is provided: water mains and sewage were installed recently. Washago is the nearest urban centre. Highway #69 provides access to the area. Vacationers come mainly from Toronto and began establishing cottages in the area in 1928. The surrounding land is bush or scrub growth. Conditions are not favourable for children, but adults wishing a moderate summer vacation spot find the Severn River most satisfactory. Mrs. Latticer has a small food stand and several cabins which she rents to those not able to have their own cottage.

There are also several cottages on the Black River. These are situated in even more rugged surroundings since the river is in a youthful stage. Its shores are rocky and forested with pine. Thus the cottages are humble, some serving city folk and a few for retired farmers of the area. MacDonald sold part of his land and now looks after the maintenance of two cottages built there by



No. 26 Fishing is a popular sport in the rivers of northern Rama Township. The rugged shores of the Severn River add to its beauty as a holiday spot.



No. 27 A small cottage hugging the shore of the Severn River is typical of many such isolated dwellings in the rock-knob lowland area.

people from Oshawa and Toronto. Some swimming and boating are possible but only in limited areas of the river. Fishing is the major sport. There is much room for expansion in recreational land use along the Black River.

At the south end of Lake St. John, Morrison has three cabins in which fishermen may stay overnight. He also has boats for hire and in this way picks up extra income to supplement that from his farming. McNab at Longford Mills also has boats for hire. Doyle on the east side of Mud Lake provides rooms in his home for fishermen and duck hunters. Because this lake is so shallow with marshy shores, it provides excellent food and shelter for migrating wild fowl. However it seems that game has recently been declining and only the first shooting has brought worthwhile returns. The lake has been restocked three times. Pike, catfish and carp are now the most dominant types.

Recreational areas inland could be further developed, making non-farm lands of some constructive use.

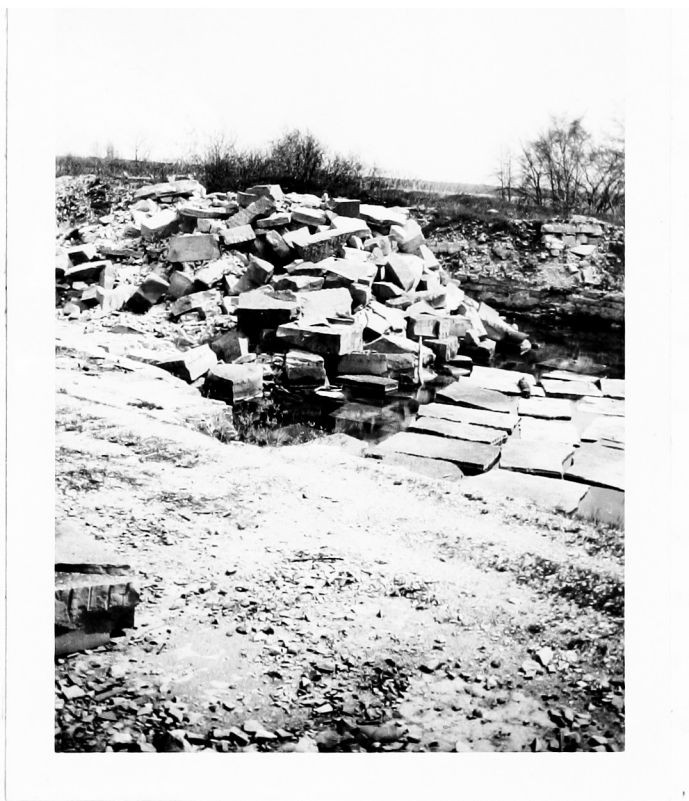


No. 28    Mud Lake is shallow with mucky shores and containing feed for fish and wild fowl. Close observation will show marshy sections at the water's surface. The cultivated area in the foreground is a small clay area which has been put to use.

In 1950, in Rama Township, buildings were assessed at \$593,050.00 and businesses at \$22,875.00. The majority of communities in Rama Township are small crossroad centres with a school, church or store. For example, Ramola has a school and a few scattered houses. A post office, which once existed here, is no longer. At Rama there is also just a school. (This is distinct from Rama Road). The same is true at O'Connell. Rathburn is slightly larger with a general store and Fawkham has the township hall as well as a school. Sebright is still larger with a service station, general store, post office, church, school, and community hall. Cooper's Falls is the oldest community having 9 houses, a post office, general store and gas pump. It was originally a mill town. When this industry declined, the town persisted despite adverse physical conditions and isolation. It now serves farmers in the district and has a strong community spirit.

Longford Mills is the largest community and contains a chemical plant the only manufacturing industry of the township. It is a company town situated on Lake St. John where it once thrived with 5 saw mills and a population of several hundred. As forest products were exploited, this industry declined, as did the population. For a short time, limestone and marble were excavated from a large quarry just north of the town. The Imperial Bank in Toronto was built from this material. Another quarry south of the Portage





No. 29    The limestone quarry north of Longford Mills lies idle since production proved unprofitable.    In the distance may be seen Lake St. John.

was also worked and from this came limestone for the Toronto Union Station. But unfortunately, these quarries were sold to Queenston to prevent competition, and then closed to operation due to the expense involved. Also there is the drawback that all-year production in Rama is impossible. So once more the population declined.

In 1905 there was a wood distillation plant. This became idle during the depression years but was reopened in 1939 for the production of acetone. At the conclusion of World War II, the plant was converted to produce carboxel, a German product which acts as a substitute for starch, sizing agents and food fillers. Of late, there has been expansion and now two companies are active - one, the Standard Chemical Company of Canada; the other the American Chemical Developments Company. Ansco film is produced by the latter. There is a great deal of secrecy about the plant's production methods, possibly due to the fear of competition or for defense purposes. It is known that the base material for carboxel is wood pulp which is shipped by rail from Quebec. The final product is used by Pulp and Paper Companies for coatings on paper boxes, by textile plants supplanting starch as a sizing agent, in weaving to reduced wear through friction, in soap, in food such as ice cream or chocolate milk as a filler or stabilizer.<sup>1</sup> Sales are managed through the head office in Leaside, the product serving the greater part of Canada. The Longford Mills plant is merely the production unit.

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<sup>1</sup>"What is Carboxel" - Standard Chemical Company Limited.

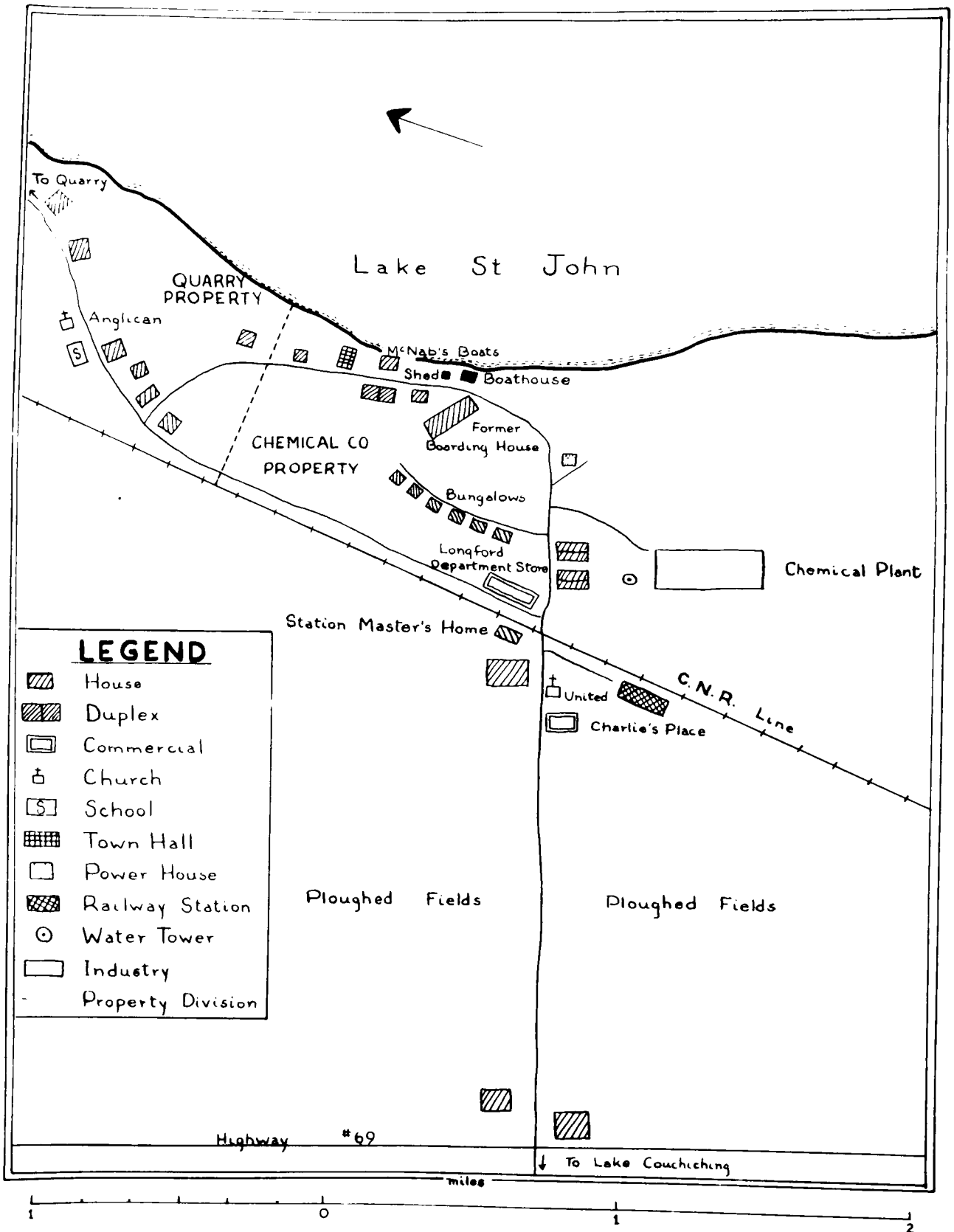
It was valued at \$80,500.00 in 1950. This area was chosen because it already belonged to the company and buildings were present thus allowing cheaper production. A railway serves it and employees are available, some from Orillia, most from Longford Mills and vicinity. There are 35 to 40 men employed who work in 3 shifts of 8 hours. The plant is shut for only 1 week of holidays. The industry seems to be experimental and thus somewhat unstable. This causes discontent amongst the workers, as does the impersonal management and the secretive nature of the industry. If there could be more interest encouraged among the workers in the Company and its work, the town itself would be more progressive.

There are now less than 100 people living in 22 houses and duplexes in Longford Mills. There is a school, two churches, a general store and post office, town hall, gas station and restaurant, and C.N.R. station as well as the chemical plant. A former boarding house is now lived in by only one family. The general upkeep of the town is lacking and although rent is only \$4.00 per month, extra money earned seems to go to frivolous pleasure. There is something lacking in this community which is producing problems just as severe as those in the Indian reservation. Because it is a company town, improvement could be gained through increased interest and a changed attitude of the company towards the people.

Development of these urban centres can never be on a very expensive scale. However they are vital in serving the agricultural

and recreational population. There is room for improvement in their appearance and service facilities. Orillia and Washago are larger competing centres which limit the growth of similar centres in Rama Township. However, it would seem to the writer that a type of industry such as the research centre at Longford Mills could be developed in other parts of Rama Township.

# LONGFORD MILLS



There is a total of 1,600 acres of land set aside in small sections throughout Rama Township for Indians. These scattered bits of land are mostly of poor quality, either marsh or covered with thin soil. In 1840, the Indians, which had collected in Orillia, were dispersed to reserves at Georgina Island, Lake Simcoe, Beausoliel Island, Georgian Bay, and the Rama reserve. Those at Rama were principally Chippewa or Ojibway, both words meaning the same tribe to the Indian. They were given some of the remaining strips of common land, thus accounting for the discontinuity of the reserve area. In 1950, the population was 375. Indians are increasing in number since the total was only 300 in 1945. A government agent takes charge of Indian administration and to him all problems are brought. The Indians elect their own chief and council every three years through which all local government is enacted but the Indian agent has the supreme position in the Indian's affairs. Because one individual is so important to the Indian community under the present system, it is most important that he be fair and understanding. It is a responsible job often considered unintentionally as secondary or unimportant by the agent.

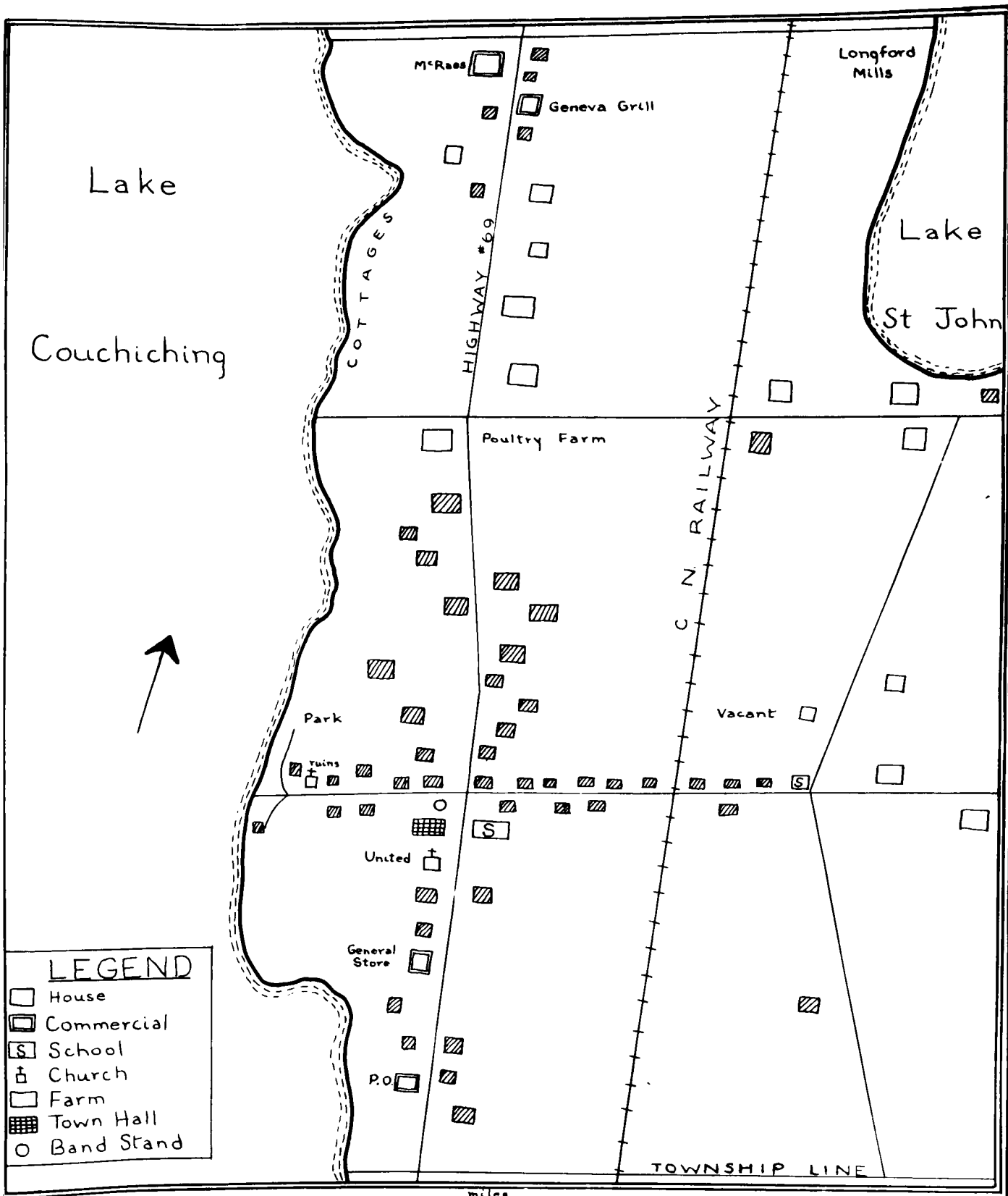
The Indians living on the reserves are protected in that they pay no taxes and have free health service. They are not restricted to these areas however and many Indians with more initiative live on land outside the reserve. There they must pay taxes but

there they assume responsibility and become citizens in the true sense of the word. They loose the quality of stagnation and shiftlessness that is often evident among Indians living on the reserves. Those living in the Indian's territory are the community's responsibility and need not concern themselves with the essentials of life. For example, the old are given pensions in kind. Land is distributed by the location ticket system. That is land can be sold or bequeathed only within the band. Otherwise it is surrendered to the government for sale. Lakeshore property has been sold in order that cottages might be constructed there. The Indians were not allowed to build and rent cottages themselves. The largest single section in area and population is centered around the community of Rama Road where the only Indian village exists. Here a concentration of population is gathered around the town hall, school, church, two stores and post office. The buildings vary from poor unpainted shacks to well-kept fenced lots with clean and moderate sized homes. The average is midway between these two types. A four acre park by the lakeshore is an interesting feature of this community and could possibly be put to more use. In other areas there may be a few scattered dwellings or no habitation whatsoever. Some of this uninhabited land is rented to farmers as pasture or, if it is of no value, it is left as waste land. Chief Island is also included in the reservation and was the burying grounds until the Indian agent moved the cemetery to the mainland.

There is only one Indian who farms in Rama Township. Most may have a small garden, but their occupation takes them away from

# RAMA ROAD

Plate 11



## LEGEND

- House
- Commercial
- School
- Church
- Farm
- Town Hall
- Band Stand

miles

1/2

1

1 1/2



their home. Many Indians are employed in construction and maintenance of summer cottages and camps along the lakeshore; some are in the Longford plant; others work for the hydro; a few go to Orillia for jobs. In difficult times, they guide and trap but this is becoming continually less profitable. In the winters it is a temptation to loaf and spend the summer's earnings. But in Rama Township in the winter of 1949-50 it was found that the rate of employment in the winter was higher for the Indians than for the whites. There is a greater problem in the occupation of children. It seems to be difficult to keep up attendance at the Rama school where two teachers are in charge. This is perhaps partly the fault of the parents but it is the opinion of the writer that the blame should be placed on the educational system. As for religion, the majority are Protestant and go to the United Church at Rama Road. There are a few Roman Catholics. The original Indian church was built near the lake by the Indians but was never used as a place of worship. Lightning struck it and the superstition of evil spirits was more meaningful than the Christian faith so that to-day only the ruins of a church remain, existing without use for 110 years. It is said that at one time it was used as a school, but that was not for long.

Recreation is little organized. There is a baseball league and dances are held, but most of the people go to Orillia for entertainment. Handicraft was at one time encouraged. Quill work,



No. 30 This Indian home is similar to many in Rama. It is unpainted with surrounding grounds poorly kept. Notice the poor quality land in which it is situated.



No. 31 The historic Rama church has stood for 110 years. Indians built it but due to superstition it has never been used.

basketry, knick-knacks and souvenirs are still made to some extent in the winter months and sold to tourists in the summer either around Rama or in the Indian village at Port Carling. There has been a fall fair lasting several days at which some of their work was displayed. This is losing popularity and organized recreation of all types is dwindling. Perhaps the very means of improving the place of the Indians in our society is failing - the way to teach him to use leisure time to his advantage rather than slip still further in the estimation of others. The agent seems to feel that the problems which the Indian has are time-consuming enough without organizing further activities for him. Would many of these problems not be avoided if something positive and constructive was undertaken for his welfare?

On the whole, the Indians are in good health. Their standard of living and homes are improving over the years. During the war, every Indian male of age in Rama offered his services to Canada, which is an amazing record since conscription is not practised among the natives. They have abilities for handicrafts and music, and favourable characteristics of loyalty, integrity, and friendliness. The Indian of Rama is faced with many problems. The land which he was given is of a poor quality. Yet his chance to succeed off the reserve is limited. Recreational provisions are lacking, as are any encouragements to his own unique abilities. A feeling of aimlessness and inferiority is apt to dominate his life - a life holding so many possibilities to aid his own peoples and

his home in Rama. It would seem that education is one of the major forces which can help solve the problems facing the Indians of Rama Township - an education for the white population as much as for the Indians.

## Summary

Physiographically, Rama Township is divided into two main sections: a more rugged north with rock outcrops, thin soil deposits, and youthful rivers and streams; and a more prosperous south of limestone plains, Algonquin Lake plain, and drumlinized till plain with richer soils and small lakes. However outcropping of rocks occur in the south and deeper soil deposits in the north. This makes for somewhat of a blending of the physical landscape of Rama Township into a unit. The climate of this region is transitional between the colder north and the warmer south.

Human geography has played a part in the development of Rama Township to its present status. History must be considered in so far as it has modified the profound influence of the physical characteristics. Early days were marked by pioneering and lumbering. As settlement became established, a division in land use was evident. Farming became established where soils were the most suitable. Grazing and general farming have dominated. Advantages of natural resources and location encouraged the development of recreational centres. Small towns and villages grew at vantage points to serve the population. Certain sections were set aside as an Indian reservation.

This patchwork of land use is not without meaning. The physical characteristics of Rama have limited man in adapting himself to his environment to a great extent. Where agricultural

land use has failed in a locality, recreational land use has succeeded. The Indian population of this township has been located on inferior land and has thus been deprived of opportunities to progress.

This study has revealed that the people of Rama Township have not yet made the most satisfactory adjustment to their environment. The investigation of past mistakes and failures should throw some light on future planning in this part of Ontario.

## Conclusion

Rama Township may be considered as a transitional area, since within its boundaries are found many conditions which prevail in southern and northern Ontario. Both Paleozoic rocks and the Shield are present. The climate partakes of some of the characteristics of both northern and southern Ontario. It is the border zone between deciduous and coniferous growth. There are areas with soil fit for agriculture and areas bare of soil. Some farmers are successfully making a profit while others are only managing to survive on a subsistence level. There are sections where city-folk seek recreational pursuits while in other regions the Indians hunt or trap.

Yet despite these distinct contrasts, there are other factors which give it a certain unity. Granite outcrops appear in the Paleozoic section and limestone outlyers are evident in the north. The two climatic types are modified by Lake Couchiching. Deciduous and coniferous growth are intermingled in many areas. Pockets of fertile soils exist in the north while areas bare of soil may be found in the south. All types of recreation, agriculture, and Indian life are also spread throughout the township. However the unity which is evident does not always obtain in social relationships. Until this friction is overcome, Rama Township can not be developed fully.

Perhaps the best adaptation to the environment of Rama Township has been made at the Portage. Here farming and the tourist industry are combined, with some Indians employed when needed. This is an ideal practise for the average resident. Specialization may also be successful, either in agriculture by using the extensive interior ranch lands, or in recreation by developing camps such as Geneve Park and the Ontario Athletic Camp along Lake Couchiching.

Whatever adaptation man choses in Rama Township, he is faced with problems. Progress may be won only by hard work and large capital investment. Overcrowded conditions along the lakeshore is also a threatening problem. Anyone attempting improvement or new ventures in Rama should be aware of these disadvantages. If a proper adjustment is made to the physical environment, there can still be much progress made in the development of this township.

Rama Township has the advantage of a favourable location. Accessibility to many large urban centres is a definite asset to its tourist industry.

It would appear that Rama Township is not in the near future destined to be amongst the more prosperous regions of Ontario, but if the geographical advantages and resources are more fully understood, there is the hope that it can provide a better standard of living and a happier life for its present residents.



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