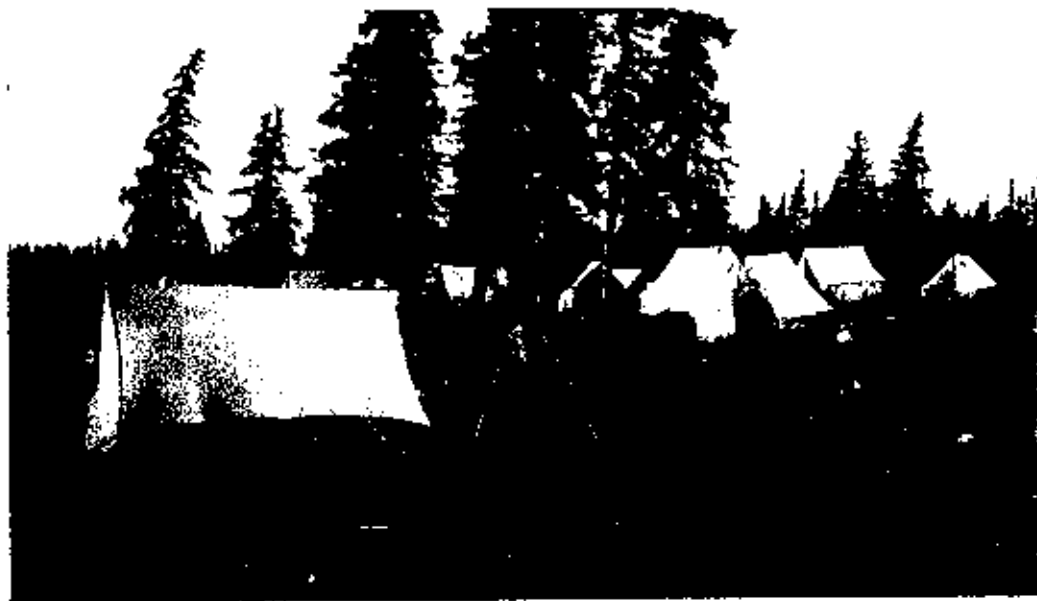


BERENS RIVER

A Community Study



Treaty Time at Berens River, 1920s (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Written by Sandy Lindsay
Edited by Raymond M. Beaumont

Frontier School Division No. 48
1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is a continuation of Frontier School Division's commitment to providing children with material directly related to their experience and community.

Berens River is one of the oldest communities along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, and this study package for middle years students is an attempt to provide them with a basic understanding of its history, so that they may gain an appreciation for the struggles and accomplishments of their elders.

Special thanks to Manitoba Education and Training for its support through the compensatory programme. And to elders, school committee members, and other leaders within the Berens River First Nation and community for their support as well.

Also to Sandy Lindsay for researching, compiling and writing the basic text, Raymond Beaumont for editing the text for the printers, and Debbie Ledoux and Kate Friesen for layout, typing the text, and making editorial changes.

Cam Giavedoni
March, 1992

The School Division is appreciative of those who contributed to the success of this project. A special 'thank you' is extended to the elders who gave freely of their time and knowledge, as well as the staffs of the Hudson's Bay Company and Provincial Archives; Ralph Abramson of the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre; Thora Cook, Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg; Bill Peckham and Bill Badiuk, principal and vice-principal respectively of Berens River School, both of whom provided valuable assistance in terms of contacts and accommodations. Special mention must be made of Brother Perron's generosity in allowing the use of the Oblate Brothers collection of Berens River photographs. These along with pictures provided by Mrs. Winnifred Kuldys and Maurice Berens form the core of the photographs used. The American Philosophical Society must also be acknowledged for the use of its Hallowell materials relating to Chief William Berens. And Dr. Jennifer S. H. Brown, University of Winnipeg, for editing and making available to us A. Irving Hallowell's ethnographic study The Ojibwa of Berens River, Manitoba.

Lastly, recognition must be given to the key role played by Cam Giavedoni, Area 3/5 Superintendent, for his persistent pursuit of relevant and meaningful programs for native children; Raymond Beaumont for sharing documents, photos, and knowledge of Berens River; Ken Paupanekis for his encouragement, comments and support; Debbie Ledoux for her skill and patience in deciphering, typing, and correcting a veritable mountain of 'illegible' script; and finally to Kate Friesen for typing and layout on the computer of the final edited copy.

Sandy Lindsay
March, 1992

TO THE TEACHER

Frontier School Division has commissioned the production of **Berens River: A Community Study**. Its purpose is to provide a coherent body of relevant materials with which to meet the needs of teachers, students, and community alike.

"One of society's purposes in requiring formal education for its children is to preserve and transmit to the next generation its history, language, religion and philosophy - to ensure a continuity of the beliefs and knowledge that a people hold in common."

This local social studies program provides a most convenient avenue for realizing this particular purpose. It includes a student text and accompanying teacher's guide as well as a resource file consisting of supplementary information.

The vocabulary, methods, activities, and content of the text have been selected on the basis of their suitability for students at the intermediate level. A glossary of new words is included with each unit. Map work is stressed.

In Unit 1 the climate, soils, geology, natural vegetation, wildlife, and geographic forms have been treated in detail. Because the oral tradition and documented records of the people of Berens River suggest a close affinity to and knowledge of nature and geography, this detailed study attempts to ensure a continuity of that knowledge. The land has and remains a cardinal feature of aboriginal history.

Similar enrichment has been introduced in the history of the community. Due to the scope of this history, Unit 2 has been divided into three sections as follows:

Berens River Long Ago

Change Quickens at Berens River

Berens River in the Twentieth Century

Units 3 and 4 have not been so enriched. These topics (Needs and Wants, and Conflict and Co-operation at the Community Level) have been approached from the perspective of the students. While subjects for consideration have been suggested, child-centered activities from the students' perspective must take precedence.

Suggested Supplementary Reading

1. Edward Benton-Banai, The Mishomis Book (St. Paul: Indian Country Press, 1979)
2. Judie Bopp et al., The Sacred Tree (Lethbridge: Four Worlds Development Press, 1984)
3. Tom Boulanger, An Indian Remembers (Winnipeg: Peguis, c.1971)
4. Thomas Fidler and James R. Stevens, Killing the Shaman (Ontario: Penumbra Press, 1985)
5. Chief Dan George, My Heart Soars (Toronto: Clarke Irwin and Company Ltd., 1974)
6. A. Irving Hallowell, The Ojibwa of Berens River, Manitoba, edited by Jennifer S.H. Brown (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992)
7. John J. Rowlands, Cache Lake Country (New York: W. M. Norton and Co., 1978)



Elsie Bouchie
First elected Woman Chief of the
Berens River First Nation, 1991

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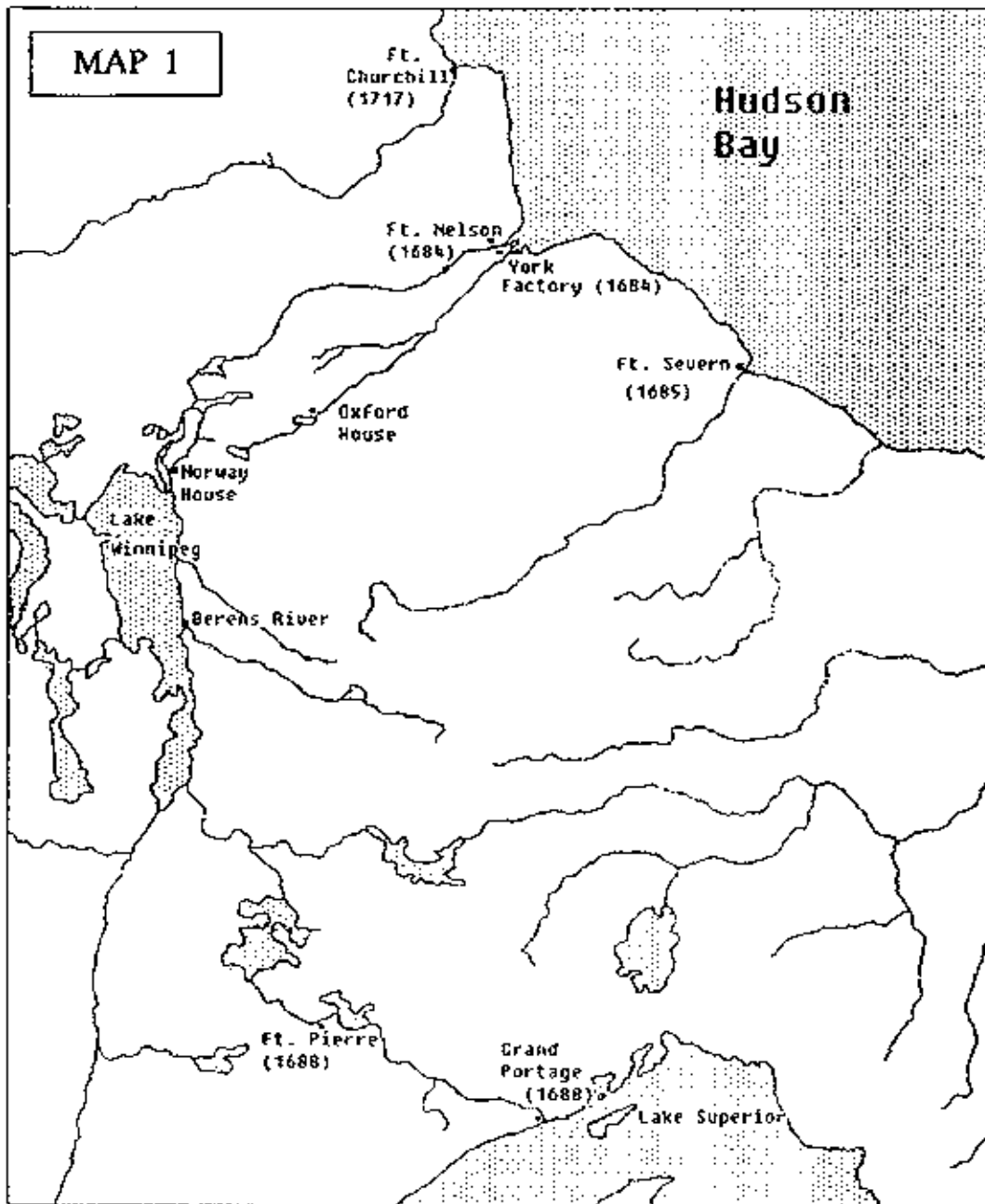


Jacob Berens, Nah-Wee-Kee-Sick-Quah-Yash,
first chief of the Berens River Band,
and his wife Mary McKay. (courtesy Maurice Berens,
also available from Archives of Ontario, Toronto.)

INTRODUCTION

Where is Berens River?

Find Berens River on Map 1 below. Long ago Indian people did not live there all year long. They moved around looking for food and furs. Once a year they travelled far to trade their furs for food, clothing, and equipment. As far away as York Factory and Grand Portage. Then it became easier for them. About two hundred years ago the traders started to build their stores at places like Norway House and along the Berens River. The people did not have to travel far away any more.



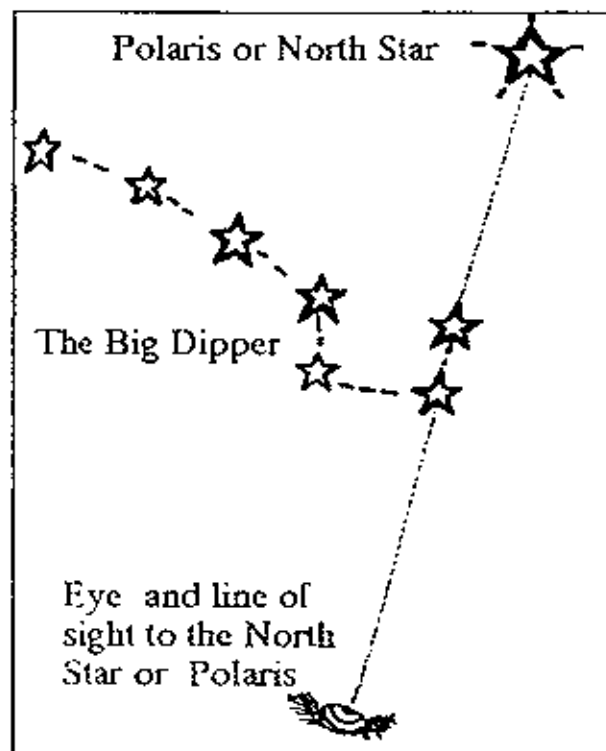
Traders travelled even farther than the Indians. Some came from Montreal. They came in their canoes all the way to Lake Superior. Then they came up the rivers from Grand Portage to Berens River. Other traders came in ships from Scotland or England across the ocean. They landed at York Factory and went up the Hayes River in canoes or York boats to Norway House. Then they came in their canoes along the shores of Lake Winnipeg to Berens River. A few of these traders married Indian women and had families. That is how the Bouchers, Everetts, Disbrowes, McKays, and others came to be in Berens River.

Travel in those days was different from today. Most people did not have maps. They did not even have compasses. They watched carefully as they went from place to place. They remembered what they had seen, so that they could come that way again. They also followed the stars and watched the sun.

You can travel in the same way today. If you are ever lost in the woods you can always find your way if you know where North is.

To find North in the day time you can use the sun. When the sun is highest in the sky and casts the shortest shadow, stand with your back to it and you will be facing North.

Look at the map of the stars below. At night you can use the group of stars called the "Big Dipper" to find the North Star.

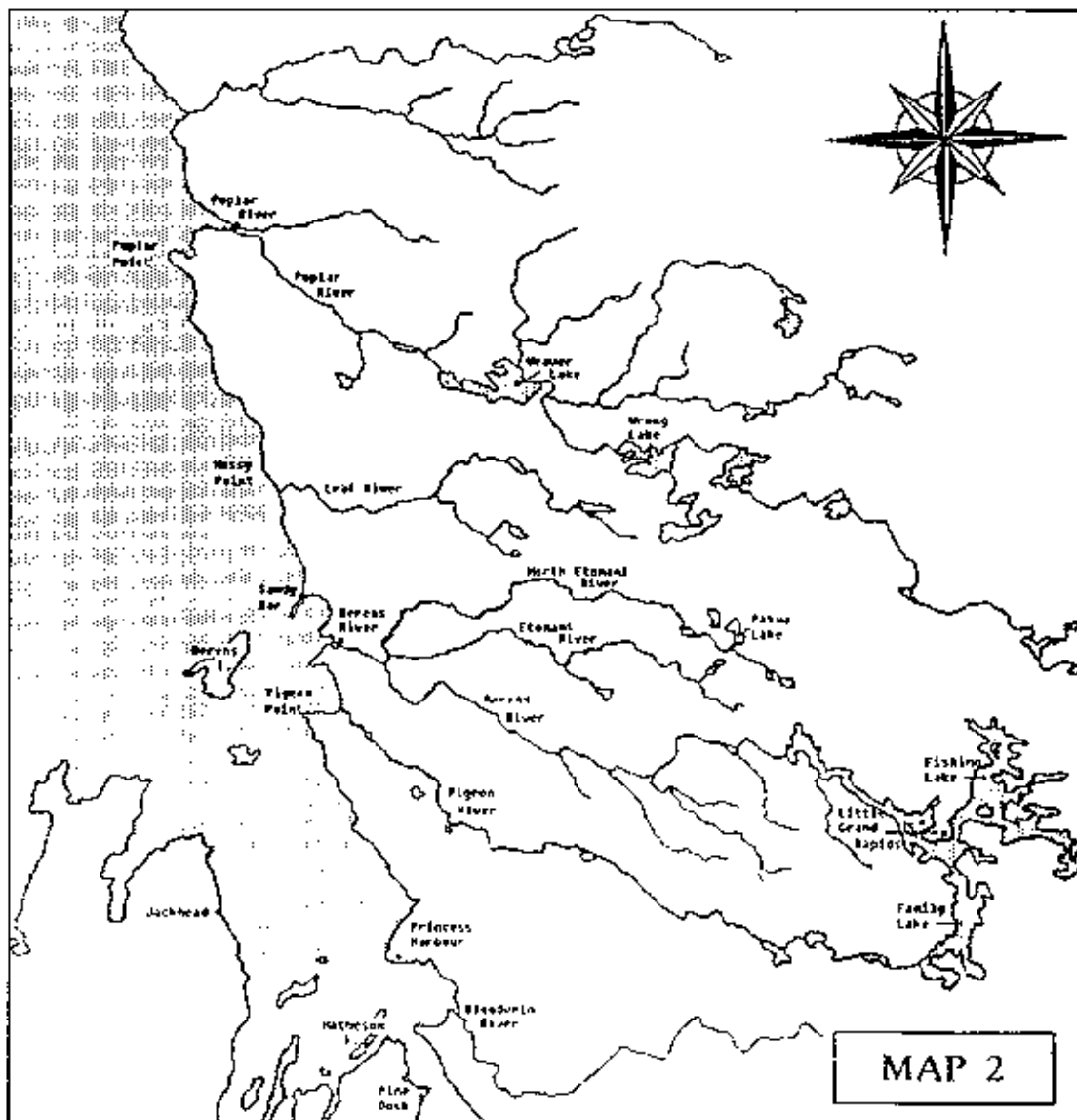


Let's Pretend

Let's pretend it is night time and we are in a spaceship a hundred kilometres above Berens River. It is a moonlit night, and there is not a cloud in the sky. We look out the window. We see what is shown on Map 2 below. Of course, the names would not be there, but Lake Winnipeg and the rivers would be shiny and silvery. There would be tiny spots of light shining up from all the towns and villages.

One of those tiny lights could be your home. Your mom and dad might be looking up at the stars.

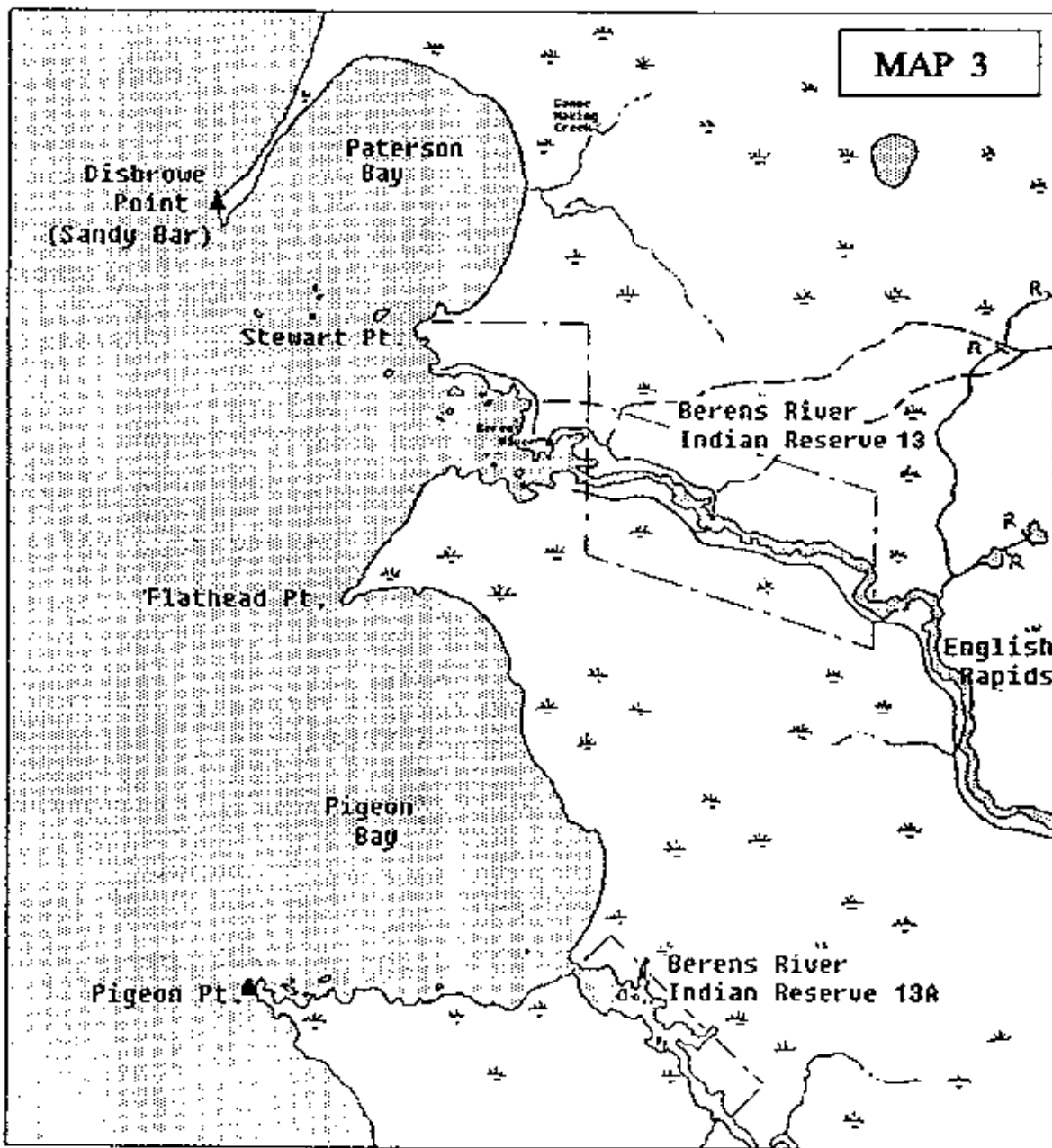
Find Berens River. Can you find Pigeon River, too? What other rivers are there? Do you see Sandy Bar and Pigeon Point? Find an island and a lake.



Let's go down for a closer look. We are now only ten kilometres above Berens River.

Study Map 3. Follow the shoreline from Pigeon Point around Pigeon Bay to Flathead Point. Then go around to Stewart Point.

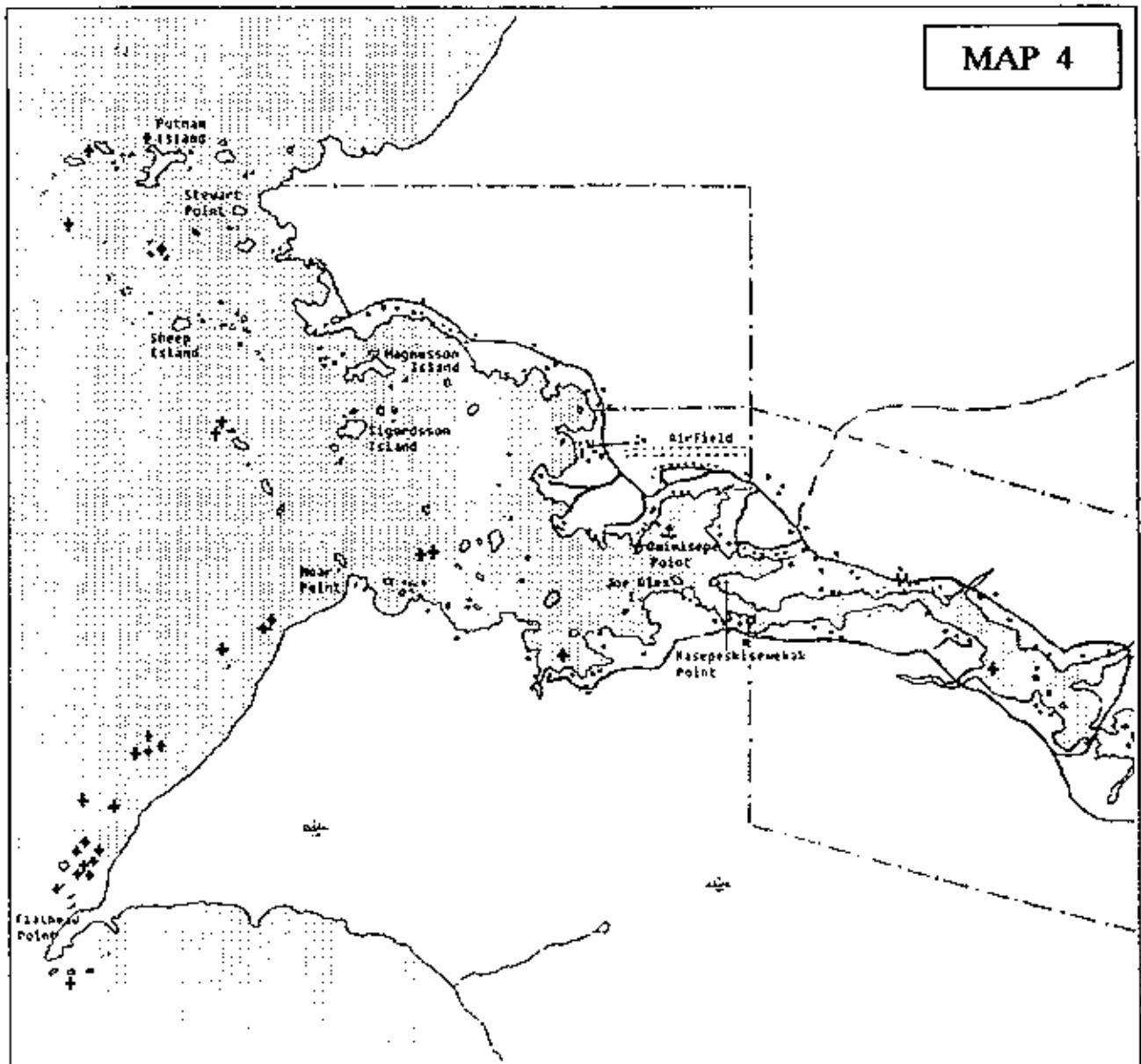
Now follow the shore around Paterson Bay past Canoe Making Creek. Go out along Sandy Bar to Disbrowe Point. Take a trip up the Berens River to English Rapids.



We are still too high. Let's go down to about two kilometres above the surface of the earth.

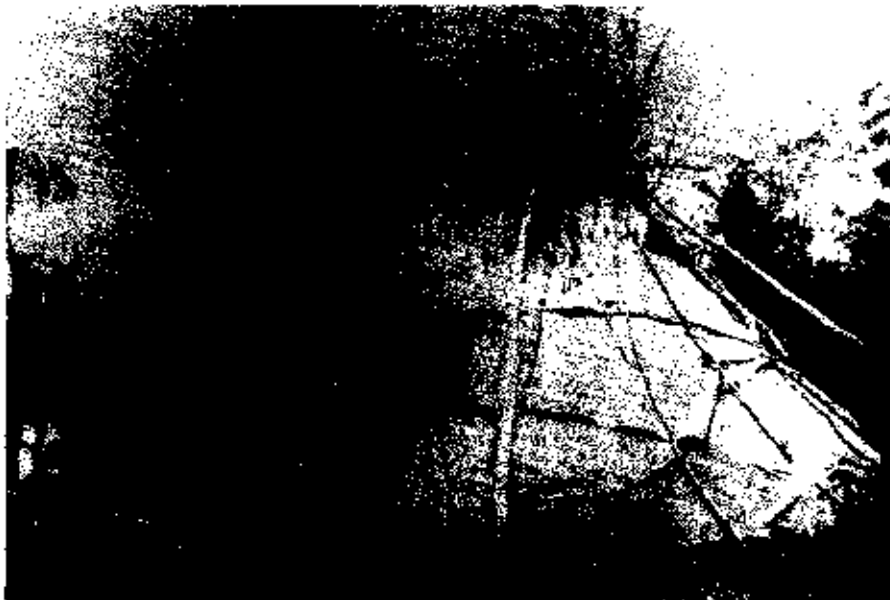
Now study Map 4. Look at the islands in the river and out in the lake. The + marks are reefs. Look up the meaning of reef on page 7. Berens River fishermen know all about them. Look at the names of the islands and points. See if you can find out how they got their names.

Let's go down for a closer look. Find the airfield and land the space ship. Welcome to Berens River.



ACTIVITIES

1. Draw a map of the classroom. Mark on important things such as your desk, teacher's desk, desks of your friends, door, sink, pencil sharpener, classroom computer, etc. Also show which way North is.
2. Make a compass rose in art class. See Map 2 on page 3 for an example of a compass rose, which is used to show direction. Write in eight points - North, North East, East, etc. Place your compass on top of your desk with North pointing North. What things in the classroom are south, west or east of you?
3. Make a large map of Berens River. Then use different symbols to mark on the important places such as churches, stores, bridge, band hall, hotel, school, arena, airport, roads, fish plant, home, burial ground, nursing station. Put in a key or legend explaining what each of your symbols means.
4. Draw a free hand sketch map of your neighborhood showing your home, friend's or neighbors' homes, roads, trails, docks, and other important things. Also show which way North is.



An old-fashioned home near Berens River, A. Irving Hallowell Photograph
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

NEW WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Bar	A narrow strip of land (like a finger), often made of sand, that goes way out into the lake.
Bay	A body of water with land around it on three sides, like Paterson Bay on the map.
Compass	An instrument to show directions so a person need not become lost in the forest.
Creek	A very small river or stream such as Canoe Making Creek.
Island	A piece of land with water all around it. Islands can be found in rivers, lakes, and oceans.
Point	The place along a shore where the land stretches out furthest into the lake. It has water on all three sides of it.
Rapids	Shallow spots in rivers where fast flowing water tumbles and falls over rocks. Rapids can be dangerous to boats.
Reef	A rocky surface hidden just under the surface of the water. Such rocks are dangerous because they can make holes in the bottom of boats.
York Factory	A fur trading post or store on Hudson Bay long ago. People from Berens River sometimes travelled there in the old days. The people moved away from York Factory when the store was closed.

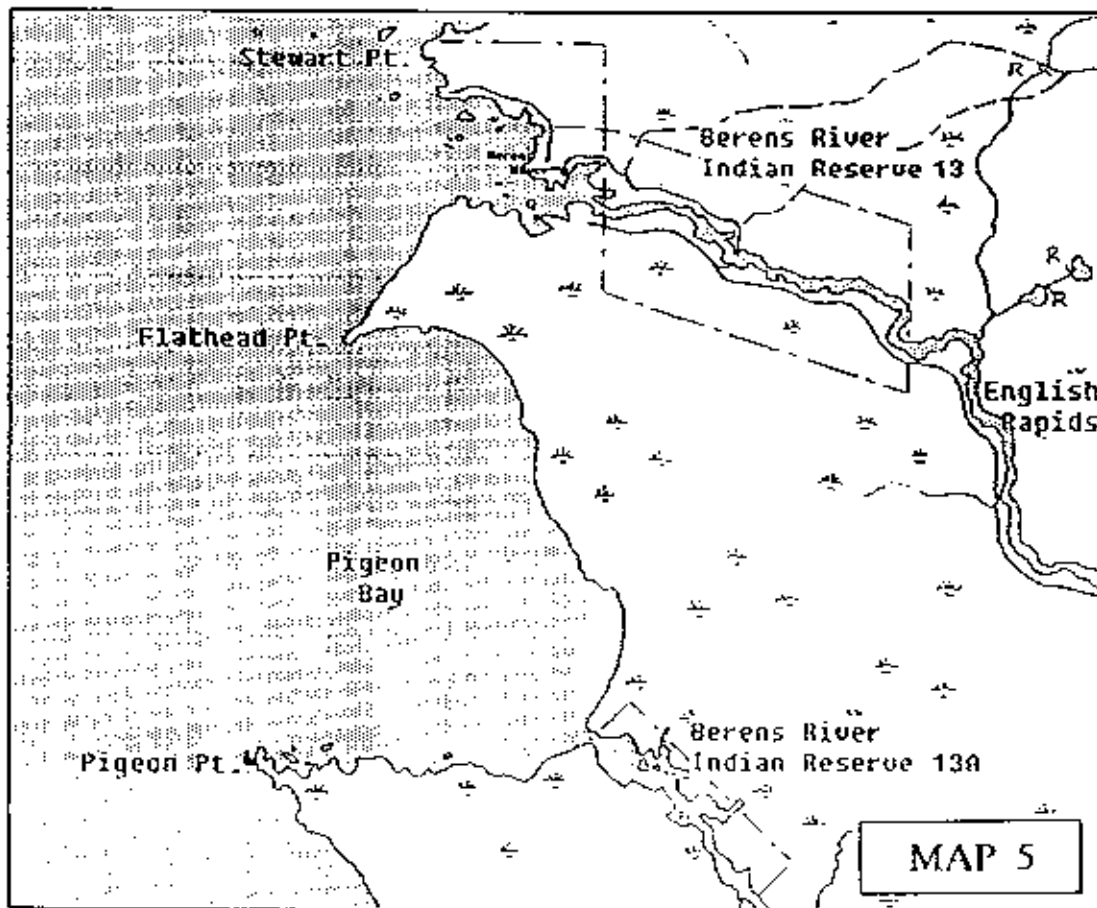
UNIT 1: OUR COMMUNITY

What is a Community?

Find the meaning of **community** in "New Words," page 23. Communities can be different from one another. An Indian Reserve is a community. A village is a community. So is a town. Canada is a very large community. Large communities such as Canada are called **nations**. Look at Map 6 on the opposite page. Find the community of Berens River. What other communities can you find?

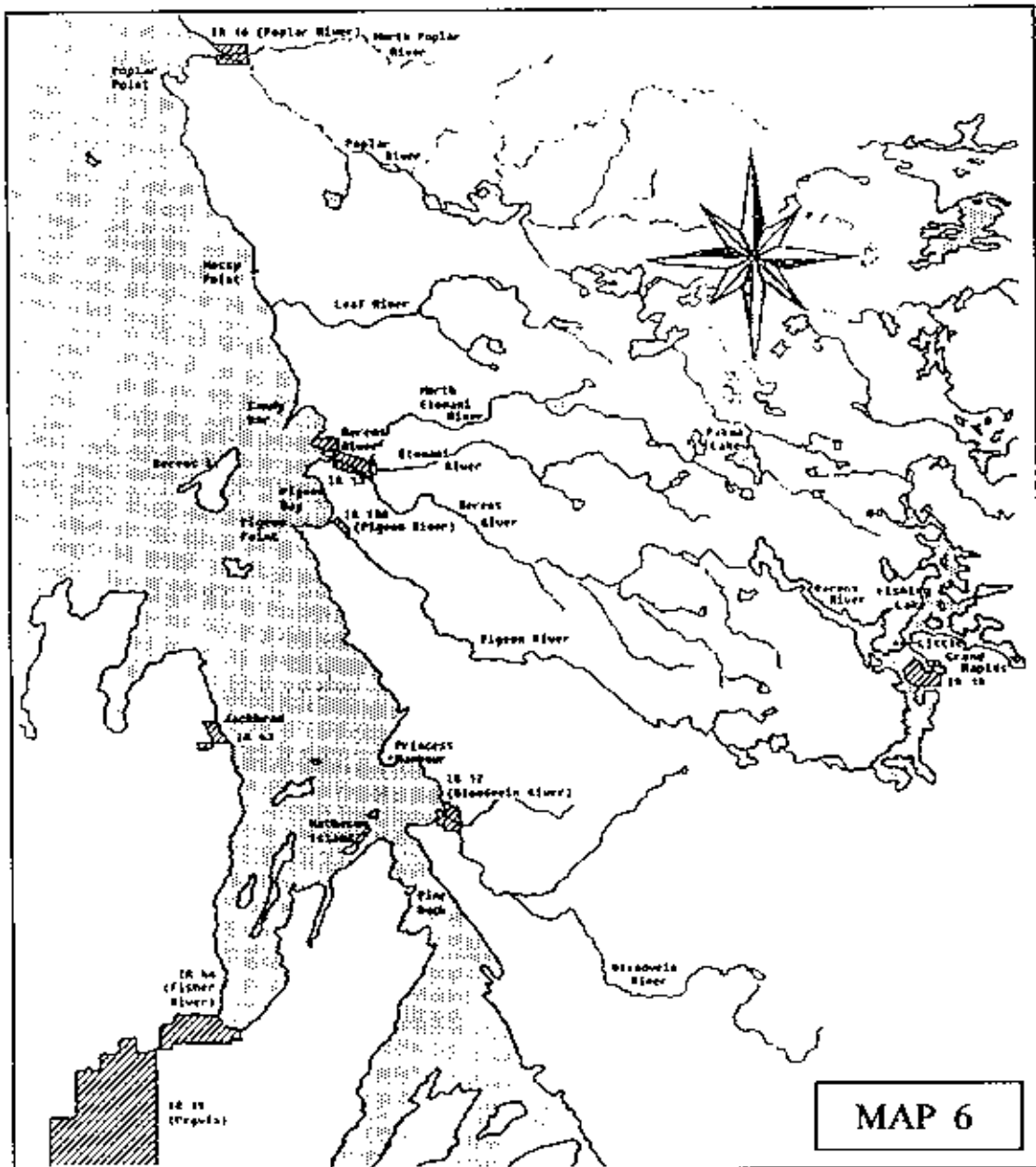
Look at Map 5 below. Find Berens River Reserve. **Boundaries** separate it from the surrounding lands. One section of the reserve is near the mouth of the Berens River. The other section is near the mouth of the Pigeon River. Can you find both parts?

Look at Berens River close to the spot where it flows into Lake Winnipeg. Two communities can be found there. If you live on the reserve, you probably belong to the Berens River Indian Band. If you live off the reserve, you probably belong to Berens River Community. You might live either at the townsite or across the river on the south side.



The people in Berens River Reserve are much like the people in Berens River Townsite. Most people in both communities can speak the Saulteaux language. Most have ancestors who were Saulteaux Indians. And most have English, Scottish, or French ancestors a long way back, too. Nearly everyone in both communities is related, so if you check carefully, you will find you have cousins on the reserve or at the townsite.

Berens River Reserve and the townsite are the same in other ways, too. No matter where you go, you will find the same kinds of trees and plants. The surface of the land is the same in many ways, too.



Physical Features

Take a walk into the community. What do you see? Is the land flat or hilly? Are there any mountains? Are there any swamps? Are there waterfalls? rapids? lakes? Is the land surface bare, or is it covered with trees and other plants? Is the shore along the river rocky? sandy? or covered with gravel?

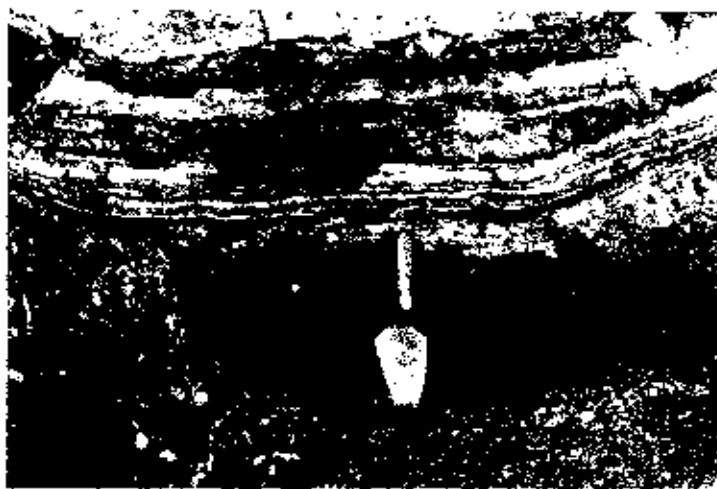
These are some of the **physical features** of Berens River. Look up “physical features” in your dictionary, page 24.

When we study the land surface or the plants that grow on it, we are studying **geography**. Look up the word geography in your dictionary. What other things does it mean?

Soils

When we study the soils of Berens River, we are also studying geography. The soil along the rivers is good in places. It can help trees and vegetables to grow. Long ago, all the land around Berens River was at the bottom of a large lake called Lake Agassiz. What is left of this lake today is called Lake Winnipeg. When Lake Agassiz dried up, it left good soil in some places. It left sand, gravel, and rocks in other places.

Dust, clay, sand, gravel, and other things that settle to the bottom of a lake are called **sediments**. In time these sediments become soil. Those soils left behind by Lake Agassiz are called **sedimentary soils**.



Sedimentary Deposits (courtesy Mineral Resources,
Manitoba Energy and Mines)



A Rock Outcrop with Boulders on its Surface
(courtesy Mineral Resources, Manitoba Energy and Mines)

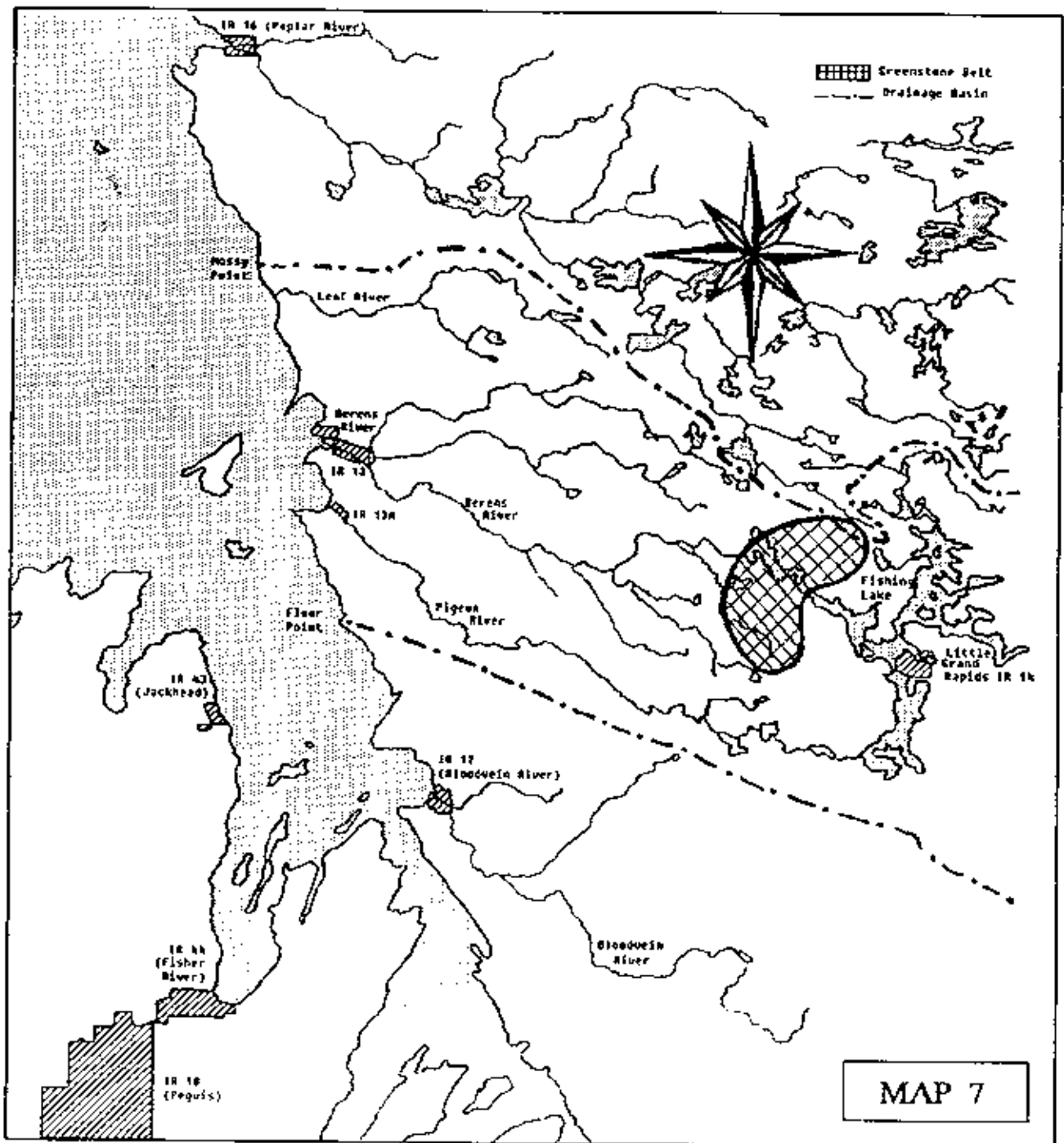
Geology

The study of rocks is called **geology**, and people who study rocks are called **geologists**.

Under the soils and sand of Berens River is a layer of hard rock. In some places this rock sticks up above the soil and sand. Such rocks are called **outcrops**. There are many outcrops around Berens River. Are there any close to the school grounds?

The outcrops you can see around the school are made of **granite**. This rock is very old and hard.

Some people have found gold and other **minerals** in granite rock. A **greenstone belt** is an area where the granite contains minerals. There are no greenstone pockets around Berens River. But there is a small belt on the river just before you get to Fishing Lake or Little Grand Rapids. Turn to the map on the next page and see if you can find it.



Long ago there was a mine called Berens River Gold Mine. It was located in another Greenstone Belt far away in Ontario, and it was not on the Berens River. The only way workers and machinery could get to the mine was by flying there in a plane or travelling up the Berens River. That is why it was called Berens River Gold Mine.

Drainage

Berens River and Pigeon River are part of a large drainage basin. The basin they drain is huge. It stretches from Mossy Point in the north to Flour Point in the south, then all the way back into Ontario. All the water or precipitation from snow, ice, and rain in this large area drains out into Lake Winnipeg through these rivers.

Look at the map on the page opposite.

Do you see the drainage basin of the main rivers? It is also called the Berens River **hinterland**. The **traditional lands** of the Berens River people are found here. We will read about these again.

Do you see the greenstone belt close to Fishing Lake? Check **minerals** in New Words, page 23, to see what minerals might be found there.

Climate

What does the word **climate** mean?

Communities which are far apart often have very different climates. Look at a map of the world. Find a place in the Arctic with a cold climate. Find another place around the Equator with a hot climate.

Let's learn more about our climate and how it affects the trees, plants, birds, and animals of our lands. Our great grandparents knew all about these things.

Here are some facts about our climate at Berens River:

Temperatures on the coldest days in January are -35C to -40C.

On the hottest days in June temperatures are +25 to +35C.

There are 115 days (May to September) when temperatures do not go below the freezing point.

There are 45 to 50 centimeters of precipitation each year.

Climate and soils help plants and vegetables to grow. Here are members of the Ikwewak Gardening Co-operative, and some of the food they grew during the summer.



The experts call our climate a Cold Continental Climate. Would you like to live where the temperatures are always like the hottest days in summer? Or where the temperatures are like the coldest days in winter?

Natural Vegetation

The climate and the soils of the Drainage Basin help trees grow. The trees that grow best in the soils and climate of our community are:

- Spruce
- Jack Pine
- Fir
- Tamarack
- Birch
- Poplar
- Scrub Oak

These trees are part of the **natural vegetation**. Bushes, shrubs, grasses, and small plants like raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and wild rice are also part of the natural vegetation.

Wildlife

In the forests you will find an animal community. This is the wildlife of the area.
Animals include:

Moose
Woodland Caribou
Otter
Beaver
Muskrat
Fox
Rabbit.

Can you name other examples of wildlife in the area?

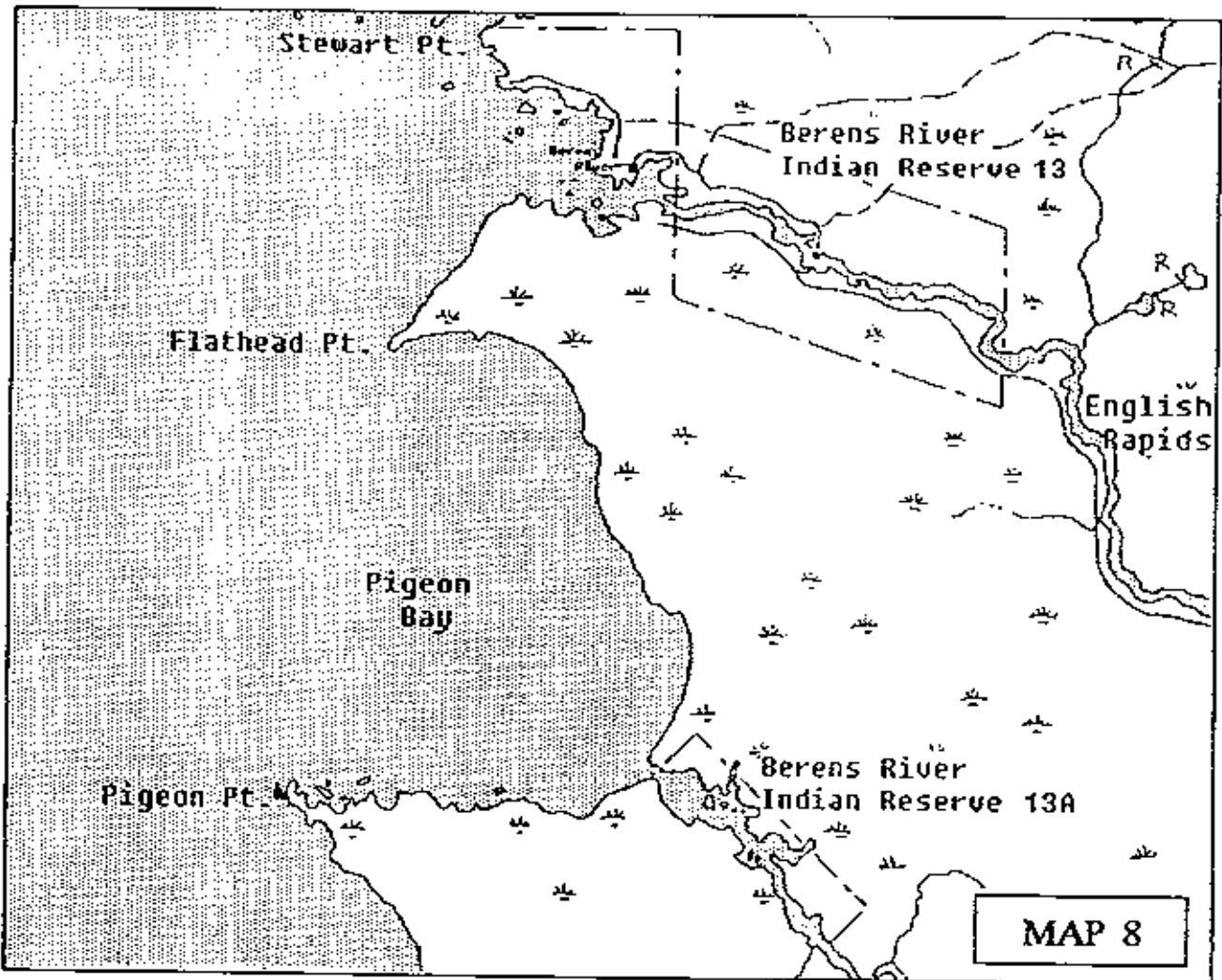


McKays Island, Berens River, 25 Aug 1921, N7289, (courtesy Manitoba Archives,
Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Population

The Berens River Reserve covers a small area. There are two pieces of land in the reserve. One piece is at Berens River. It consists of 16.46 square kilometres. The other piece is at Pigeon River. It is 2.14 square kilometres in size.

What is the total area of the reserve?



The population of the reserve and townsite has grown over the years. Donald Sutherland was the first manager of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Berens River long ago. In 1818, he wrote that there were ten boys and twenty-six grown men who traded furs at Berens River.

In 1875 when the treaty was signed, there were one hundred and ninety-five people trading at Berens River. In 1890 there were two hundred and nineteen. In 1913 there were two hundred and eighty-three. Today the population of Berens River is between thirteen and fourteen hundred people.

Land Use Today and Long Ago

The land at Berens River is used in many ways. People have built homes, stores, community centres, and churches on it. They have also planted gardens. How else do people use the land at Berens River?

The land in the drainage basin is called the **hinterland**. The people use their hinterland in many different ways. They hunt in the forests and use the trees for firewood. They cut the trees for pulpwood to send to the paper mill at Pine Falls. They use the lakes and rivers for fishing, travel, and recreation.

Different foods are obtained from the land. There are special places for picking berries during the summer and gathering rice in the fall.

What was Canoe Making Creek used for? How do you think it got its name? What kinds of trees grow there today?

How was the hinterland or **traditional hunting land** used long ago?

The traditional hunting land gave food and shelter to the Saulteaux people of Berens River. Woodland caribou, moose, beavers, rabbits, fish, geese, and ducks were favorite foods found there. The beaver, otter, muskrat, and other animals provided fur for trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. Moose, rabbit, and beaver provided skins and furs for clothing.

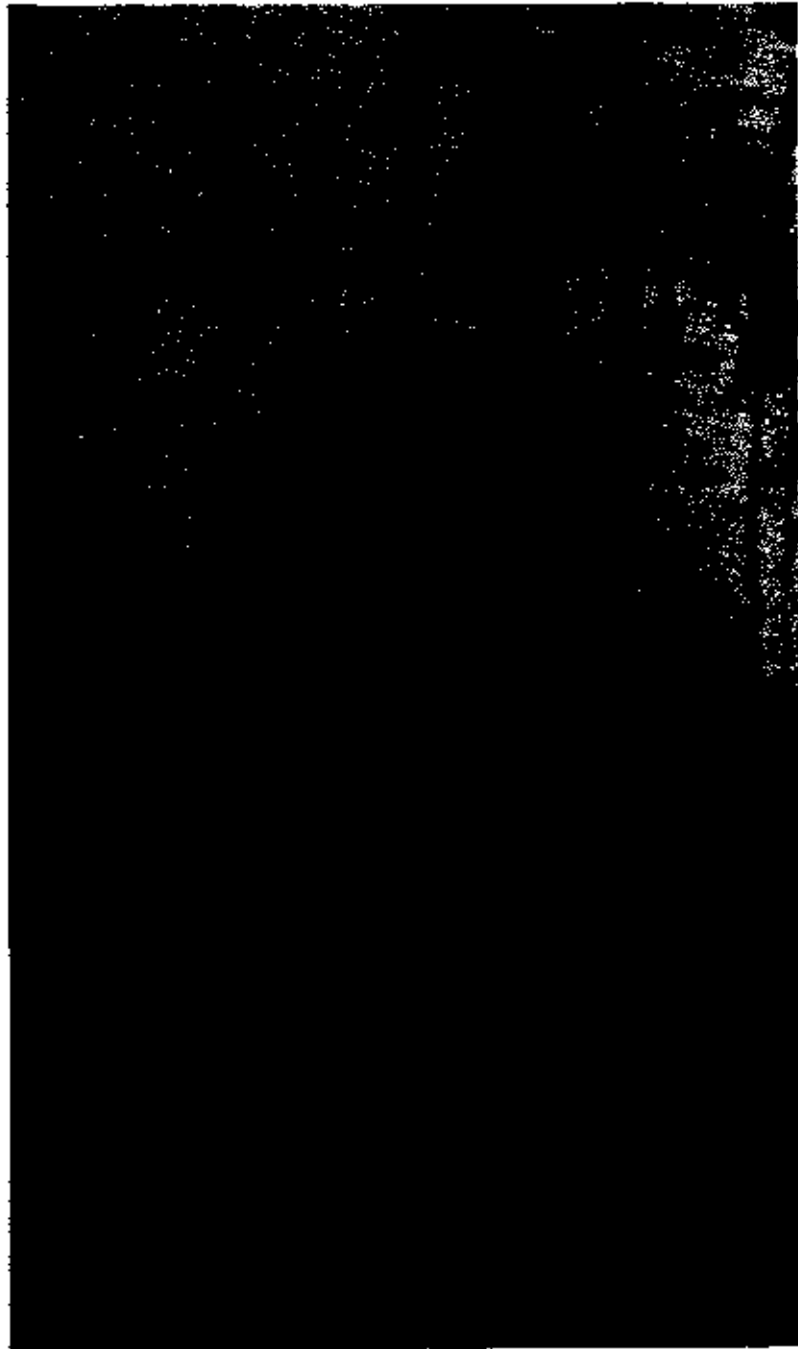
Fish were caught in all seasons but mainly from June until October. In June, sturgeon, pickerel, and goldeye were the most popular fish food. Jackfish, goldeye, and pickerel were caught throughout the summer months. Then in October whitefish were caught, put on sticks, and frozen for winter food.

Berries and rice were picked and stored in birch bark containers.



Fishing, trapping, harvesting berries and rice are still carried on by some people at Berens River.

Long ago people lived in tipis or wigwams (shelters) and travelled by foot, dog sled, or canoe. Special woods were carefully treated and bent to the shape needed for the frames of canoes, snowshoes, and shelters. Canoes and tipis were also covered with birch bark.



Tipi, c. 1920, Leif Sunde Collection 9647
(courtesy The Museum of Man and Nature)

Clothes were all made from rabbit fur, moose hide, and beaver pelts.



Children wearing Rabbit Robes, c. 1921-1934, Gordon Collection 6303
(courtesy The Museum of Man and Nature)

Toys were made from the forest woods or animal skins. See examples of a toy sled and canoe below.



The forest provided food. It provided warm shelter. It provided the materials for the canoes, snowshoes, and other things people needed in the old days.



Travel Then and Now

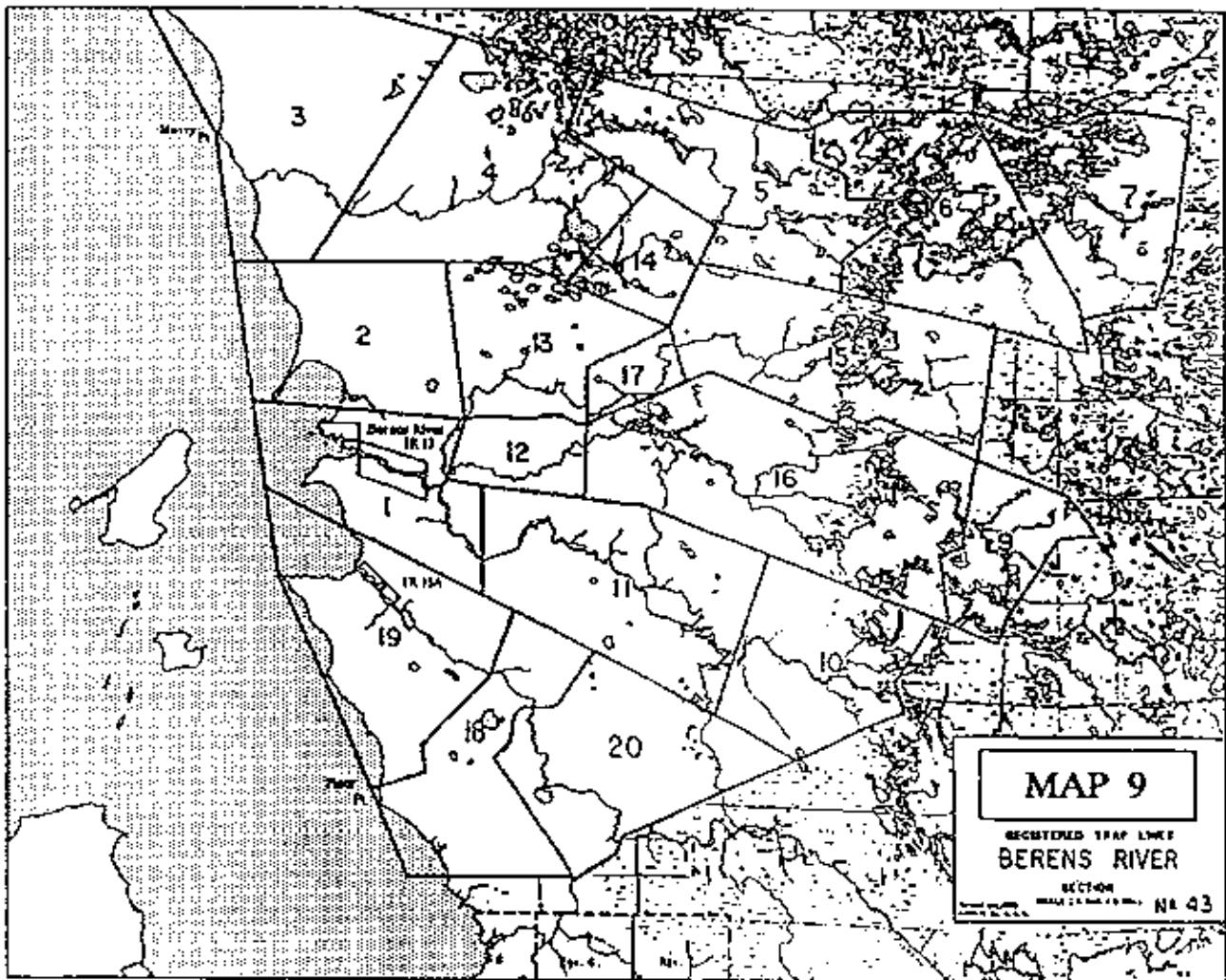
People travelled great distances by canoe in the old days. Why did they travel? And where did they go?

They would travel down river in the spring to spend the summer fishing, picking berries, harvesting wild rice, and celebrating with other members of their Band.

In the winter they travelled up river to hunt and trap. Look at the map of the Berens River trap lines on the opposite page.

For many years, starting in the 1870s and ending in the 1970s, big lake steamers came to Berens River from other places. Before the steamboats, travel on the lake was by York Boat or by sailboats called schooners. In the winter people travelled by dog sled and snowshoe.

Travel has changed. Today the people in our community travel by car or by bus. In the winter time, they travel the bush and lakes by skidoo. A winter road joins Berens River to Winnipeg, and there are airplanes which fly to Winnipeg daily. In the summer time people travel the lake and rivers in large boats, canoes, or motor boats.



Summary

We have learned many things so far about Berens River. Two rivers take the water from the drainage basin all the way to Lake Winnipeg. The drainage basin is very large. It has good hunting grounds and fishing spots.

We learned about the climate and the number of people in Berens River. We also looked at geography, geology (the rocks), vegetation, and wildlife.

We saw how long ago people used the land, waters, forests, and wildlife to provide for their needs.

The land has always been important to the people of Berens River. That is why we must learn as much as we can about our land.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Find out what these Indian names mean in English.

Pikusikun Falls
Etomami River
Kenkwaka Falls
Makik Falls
Napakasi River

2. Find the above places on a big map of Berens River.
3. People long ago had names that said things or told stories. Here are some examples.

European Name/Saulteaux Name	Meaning of Saulteaux Name
Jacob Berens or Nah-Wee-Kee-Sick-Quah-Yash	A man who is very good and lives some where between earth and heaven.
Atchitamo	A squirrel or a person who laughs and squeals a great deal.
Wa pus ta gon	A white-haired person.

4. Do you know the Indian names of elders living in Berens River? Ask at home and bring the names and their meaning to school.
5. Write out the names of your grandfather(s) and your grandmother(s). Did they have Indian names? What did the names mean?

NEW WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Boundaries	Boundaries are lines separating one place from another. A fence is a boundary; it separates one yard from another yard. The shore line between a lake and the land is a boundary. The imaginary line between Canada and the United States is another kind of boundary.
Climate	The temperature, rainfall, and sunshine over a long time, like a year. Climate is different from weather. When we talk about the weather, we mean the temperature, rainfall, and sunshine over a short time, like a day or a week.
Community	A group of people who live, work, and play together.
Geography	A description of the land, the rocks, the temperatures, as well as other things in a certain place.
Geology	The study of the soils and rocks that make up land.
Greenstone Belt	An area made up of a special kind of rock where minerals are found.
Hinterland	The land nearby a town or village.
Minerals	These are valuable substances found in rocks - like gold, silver, nickel, copper, and diamonds.
Nation	A community, usually quite large, which has its own government. It has its own army and police force, its own money and stamps. Canada, the United States, and Mexico are all nations.
Natural Vegetation	The plants and trees that have always grown in an area. They were not planted by people.

Outcrop	A large rock that sticks out of the ground and has no soil or plants covering it.
Physical Features	The hills, rivers, lakes, valleys, and swamps of an area. They have been there for a long time. They have not been made by people.
Population	The number of something. It could be of the men, women, and children who live in an area.
Precipitation	The rainfall and/or snowfall of an area. The water that comes from the sky.
Sedimentary Soil	Layers of clay, sand, gravel, and soil left by the wind, water, and ice. You can sometimes see these layers where there are river banks or on the walls of gravel pits.
Traditional Hunting Lands	The land around a community where people have hunted for many generations to meet their needs for food and clothing.
Wildlife	The animals and birds that have always lived in an area. They were not brought there by people.

UNIT 2: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF BERENS RIVER

BERENS RIVER LONG AGO

The First People at Berens River

Have you ever wondered about the people who lived in Berens River long ago? Who were they? What were they like? Is there a way you can find out?

Have you ever dug a hole in the ground? What did you find? Often there are buried treasures just waiting for someone to discover them. Sometimes they were left behind by people long ago.

Can you think of a good place around Berens River where you could dig for old things? What might you find if you dug around an old trading post? An old house? Make a list of the things you might find.

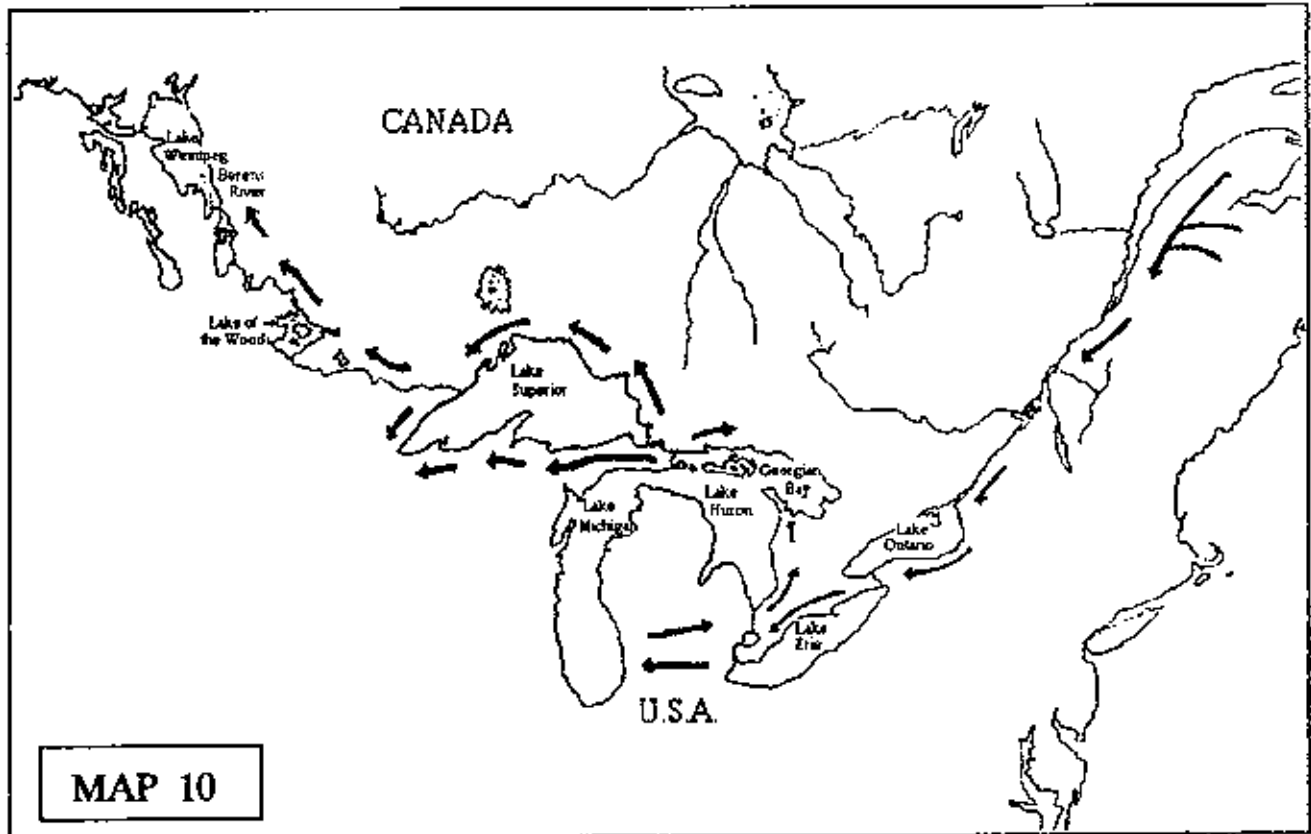
There are people called archaeologists who study things they find in the ground. This is the way they can tell how people lived a long time ago. Archaeologists have learned much about the Saulteaux people who came to Berens River more than two hundred and fifty years ago. They once lived near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and that is how they got their name.



Archaeologists at Work (courtesy Historic Resources Branch,
Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship)

Legends can help us find out more about these people. Legends are stories that have been told for hundreds and sometimes thousands of years. The Saulteaux are part of the Ojibway Nation. Old Saulteaux legends tell about the journeys of the Ojibway who travelled a long way. When people go so far, their travel is called a **migration**. You can see the Ojibway migrations of long ago in the map below.

The arrows show how the first Ojibway or Saulteaux people came to be in Berens River. The map also shows how the Ojibway people came to settle in other parts of Manitoba, in Ontario, and in parts of the United States of America.



The Westward Migration of the Ojibway

The Old Ways

The Saulteaux people have lived around Berens River for a long time. In the old days, they travelled by canoe in summer and by snowshoe and sled in winter. In summer, they came down the rivers to the lake to fish. In the fall, they went up the rivers to hunt and trap. They also picked wild berries and harvested wild rice. Our people were strong and healthy. They did not have hospitals, but there were medicine people who helped them when they were sick. These healers harvested

certain roots, bark, and flowers, then made medicine from them. These medicines helped keep sickness away. They also helped those who became ill.

Fish and meat were dried so they would not go bad. The berries and wild rice were dried and stored in birch bark containers.



Birch bark containers called rogons, (courtesy National Museums of Canada)

Our Indian grandparents respected the land because it was good for hunting and furs. It was also good for fishing, rice, and berries. It gave the people life.

They respected each other, too. People in those days believed the Great Spirit wanted them to live peacefully with each other, as well as with the animals, fish, and trees of the forest.

This was a very important part of their religion.

Mr. Sutherland, the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company Post in 1820 wrote in his journal that, "the Indian people generally live in peace and friendship with each other."

Growing Up Long Ago

What did the children in the community of Berens River do long ago when they moved about the forest with their parents? Where were their schools? Who were their teachers? What did they learn? What games did they play? What did they do when their parents travelled?

The children helped paddle the family canoe in the summer time. In the winter they helped their mothers pull toboggans bundled with food, fur, and clothing. Their fathers, grandfathers, or older brothers were often ahead hunting for moose, deer, or caribou.

As soon as the family wigwam or shelter was built, there was work for everyone. The boys gathered wood for the fires, checked the fish holes and rabbit snares, and brought home any fish or game caught. The girls helped their mothers get the food ready. They hauled the water, cleaned skins, and made clothes. Girls also helped snare rabbits and gather wood for the fires.

Mothers and fathers, and grandfathers and grandmothers, too, were the teachers in those days. The forest was their classroom.



The boys and girls learned the things they needed to know to become good mothers and fathers when they grew up.

They lived and worked together in small family communities.

They played together. They played some of the same games you play, like hide and seek, and tag. Wrestling, swimming, and running were other favorite games.

William Berens was a chief of the Berens River Indian Band. He was a son of Jacob Berens, the first chief. When he was a little boy, he and his friends made their own bows and arrows to hunt squirrels and partridge. They also played games. They would set up sticks and pretend the sticks were soldiers. They would try to shoot the soldiers with their arrows. The winner was the one who knocked over the most sticks.

The boys also took poplar wood and made boats with masts and birch bark sails. They loaded these boats with clay squares. These squares were the freight for the Hudson's Bay Company store. William said they would pretend the store was across a little bay. Then they would set the boats loose and see which one would arrive first on the other side with its cargo.

The boys also played with snowsnakes. A snowsnake was a long stick that was thrown on top of hard snow or ice. It could travel a long way. Boys and girls used to go sliding on toboggans they made of smooth wood. Sometimes they covered the wood with water to make it icy. Then toboggans went really fast and far.

The old chief remembered that girls used to make dolls to play with. They made clothes for these dolls. They used to make little wigwams or houses for them, too. Another thing they did was to press leaves and petals into wet clay. When the leaves or petals were taken out of the clay they left a pretty pattern. The pattern could be used for bead work on moccasins, gloves, mittens, or other clothes made from hides.

In the evening families would gather around the fire. Father might tell how he had hunted a moose that day, or Grandfather tell a legend. Stories were told to teach the children things. There were no books or tests in those days. Children learned by listening and watching.



Chief William Berens, A. Irving Hollowell
Photograph (courtesy Winnifred Kuldys,
granddaughter, Winnipeg)

A favorite evening pastime was the shadow game. The children used the light from the fire to make shadows of animals and other things on the walls of their wigwams.



A Homemade Doll.

The Traders Come

Over three hundred years ago, the people who lived around Berens River hunted and trapped for their own needs. Then, French traders came among them from Grand Portage with many new and wonderful things to trade for furs. The people wanted those new things, so they hunted more furs to trade for them.

For a long time only the French traders came. The English had their trading posts on Hudson Bay at places like York Factory and Fort Severn. At first they did not travel to the Indian camps for furs. They waited until the Indians came to them.

This changed about two hundred years ago. The Hudson's Bay Company began to send its traders to the hunting grounds around Berens River. The North West Company from Grand Portage also sent its traders. They built trading posts at

different places. The Indian people would often go to these posts, so that they could trade their furs for the best goods and the best terms. At the trapline the family would build a shelter for a home.



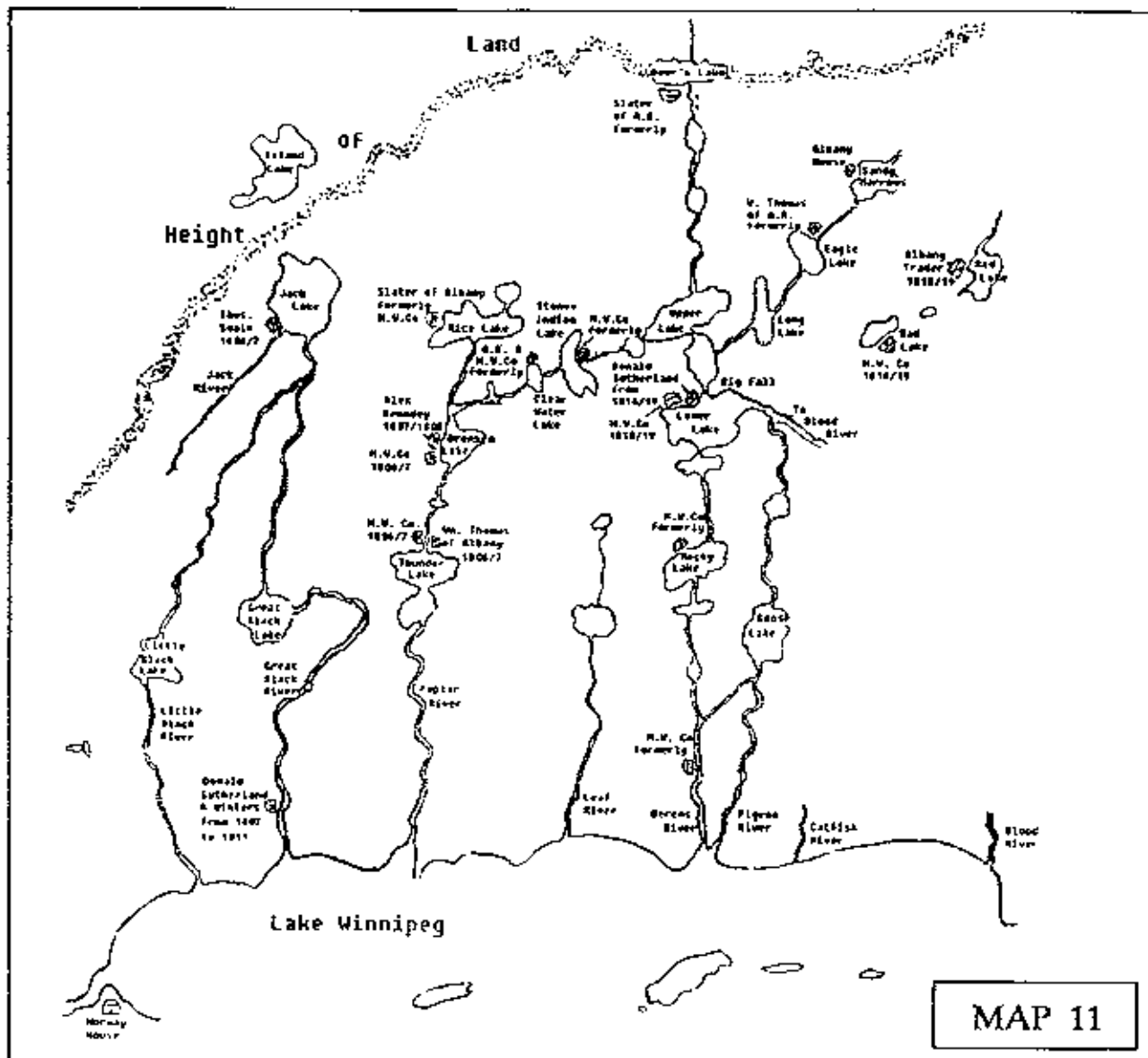
Winter Trapline Lodge, 1920
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Berens River Gets Its Name

William Tomison was one of the first Hudson's Bay Company traders to visit Berens River. In 1767, Tomison and his Indian guides canoed up the Severn River in Ontario, then down the Berens River to Lake Winnipeg.

It was many years later in 1814 that the first post was built at the mouth of the river. It was named Berens River after Joseph Berens, the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company at that time. Governor Berens lived far away across the ocean in London, England.

The Saulteaux people had their own name for the river long ago. See if you can find out what it was.



Original courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives

Sutherland's Map

In 1815, the Hudson's Bay Company built a store on the Berens River. The manager was named Donald Sutherland. Around 1820, he made a map of the Berens and Pigeon River Basin. Look at it carefully. How many trading posts can you count? Where were they built? Were the names of the rivers and lakes the same as they are today?

Mr. Sutherland made a list of the hunters who traded at the Berens River store around 1820. Here are the groups with their chiefs or leaders.

Chief or Leader	Other Hunters in Group
1. Cut Nose	Kee-wa-caaps Hart Swan Pot Lox Hart's Son Kingfisher Mee-hou-wat-ik
2. Itcho	Uskabacs Hook Nose's Son Itcho's Son
3. Sharp Eyes	Kee-so-thus-we-sick J. Simmichs
4. Big Eyes	Pilot Big Eye's Son

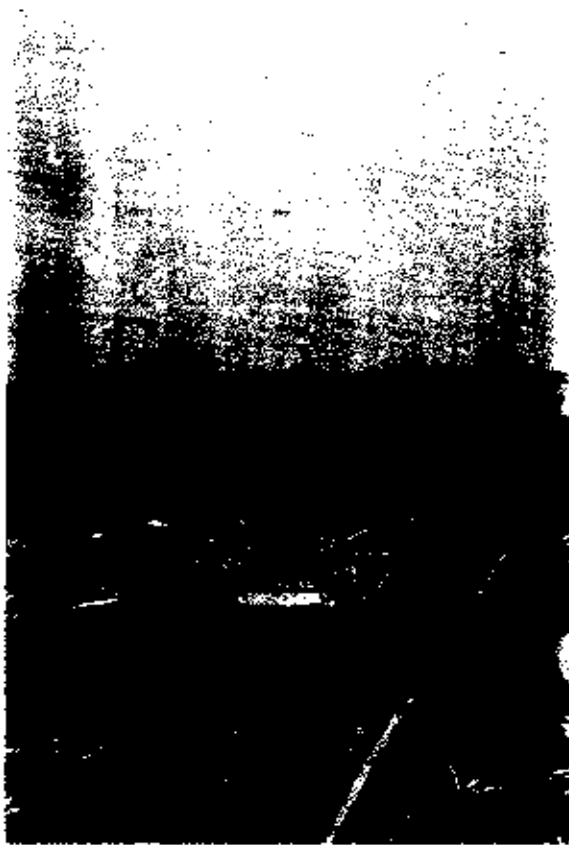
Change is Good; Change is Bad

Before the traders came, people had to work very hard to get the food, shelter, and clothing they needed to stay healthy and happy. The trading posts changed the way the people lived. They made some things easier.

People now had guns as well as bows and arrows to help them with their hunting. They could get twine to string nets and metal hooks to help them catch more fish. They could trade their furs for kettles, pots, and matches (flints), so that they could start a fire quickly and cook up food or boil a pot of tea. They could get flour for bannock or trade their furs for wool blankets. They no longer had to make needles and thread. They could get them from the traders. This made sewing animal hides easier. They could get metal axes and saws which made it easier to build their houses. It was also easier to cut wood to heat their houses. They could buy metal knives to make canoes, snowshoes, and other wooden things.

The trading posts caused some bad things to happen. People forgot how to make their own tools and implements. They now had to depend on the traders for those things. Sometimes the traders gave the people rum and whiskey for their furs. This

caused much trouble. The traders also brought certain diseases which made people sick. Many people died.



A birchbark canoe, N36698
(courtesy National Museums of Canada)



Snowshoe frames, N48889
(courtesy National Museums of Canada)

People also began to kill too many animals. The things the store had to sell were expensive. It cost many furs to get them. So the people trapped more animals to get furs to buy the things they wanted. Certain kinds of animals nearly disappeared in some places. When there were no animals, the people were hungry. Sometimes they starved.

Before the people left for their traplines, they went to the store for supplies. The store manager let them take the things they needed such as snare wire, flour, lard, and other items. He gave the trappers these things on credit. That means they did not have to pay for them right away. Later when they came back from their traplines, they gave their furs to the manager of the store to pay off their debts. Most people had debts. Before the fur traders came, the trappers only had to look after their families. Now they had to pay off their debts at the store, too.

Living Off the Land

In those days Berens River was different from what it is today. It was much smaller. No one lived at Berens River except the workers at the trading post. The people only came to trade their furs. The rest of the time they lived at their winter or summer camps.

These family camps were little communities. They were scattered all over the land. There were three to six families in each group, and they had their own winter trapping area. Each family group had its own fish camp, too.

Our great-great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers lived quite differently from the way we live today. Donald Sutherland wrote about how the people lived nearly 200 years ago. Things have changed since those days.



This is 'Bell' Sutherland. She was born near Berens River in 1820. Her father was Donald Sutherland, and her mother was Sally Wapusk. Her father took her to Scotland when she was a little girl. When she grew up, she went to live in Australia.

Isabella Sutherland, 1820 -1882
(courtesy Trevene Shillam, great-great-granddaughter, New South Wales, Australia)

Sutherland wrote that, "The main food during the summer was sturgeon."

How often do you eat sturgeon today? Have you ever seen a sturgeon like the one in the picture below?

Mr. Sutherland wrote that in late October the people caught many white fish. These were put on sticks, ten to a stick, and left outside to freeze. Then the fish stayed frozen all winter and were good to eat until the warm weather came in the spring.

Why don't people still do this today?

Then Sutherland wrote that, "besides fish Berens River has a sort of wild rice which when boiled forms a very good food." Do you and your family still gather wild rice today?



Two old hunters from a community north of Berens River, c. 1923. They are roasting a skinned rabbit. It looks like they are about to have a feast. Rev. R.T. Chapin Collection, 253-8092 (courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg).



This is a sturgeon caught at Berens River around 1920. It is almost 2 meters long. Can you guess what it weighs? How many meals could you get out of one fish this size? (photograph, courtesy Oblate Brothers)

"Rabbits," Sutherland said, "are another article of food." Do you set snares for rabbits? Does your Mom ever make rabbit stew or rabbit pie?

How would you describe how things have changed over the years?

Clans and Totems

Long ago, each family belonged to a clan. There were four clans around Berens River, and each one had a totem. These four totems were the Pelican, the Moose, the Sucker, and the Kingfisher.

One rule was that you could not marry a person from the same totem as you.

Another rule was that parents picked out husbands for their daughters and wives for their sons. This was to make sure they married a person of another totem.

Find out if your family had a totem. If you could choose your own totem, which one would it be?

The First Gardens at Berens River

Mr. Sutherland planted the first garden at Berens River. A little land around the trading post was cleared, dug up, and planted. In 1820, Sutherland harvested 80 bushels of potatoes and 42 bushels of barley. There are approximately 28 bushels in a kilolitre. How many kilos of potatoes or barley did he harvest in 1820?

The Berens River post had good gardens for many years. These gardens gave food to the manager and his employees for a century and a half. The Sauteaux people in the early days did not plant gardens. Instead, they picked the raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, and wild rice found in nature. Working in the garden was just one of the jobs at the Hudson's Bay Company Post. There was other work, too.



Preparing Sticks of Whitefish. Watercolour by F.A. Disbrowe
(courtesy Stanley Disbrowe, Berens River)

Freighting and Other New Jobs

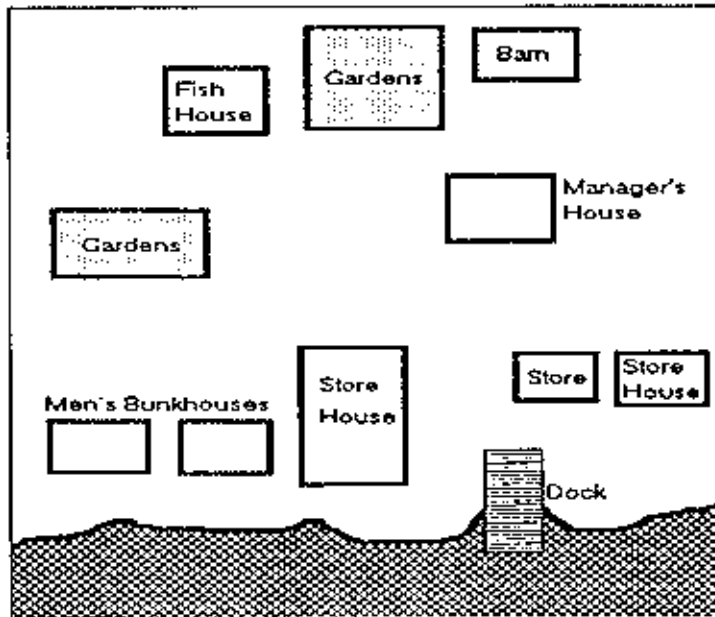
Canoes and York boats were used to carry trade goods in the early years. At first these goods were brought in from Norway House; later, they were sent from Winnipeg. From Berens River they were sent to Little Grand Rapids and other places up the river.



Freight for Little Grand Rapids. (courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

People from Berens River worked in the York boats. Others had jobs at the Hudson's Bay Post in Berens River.

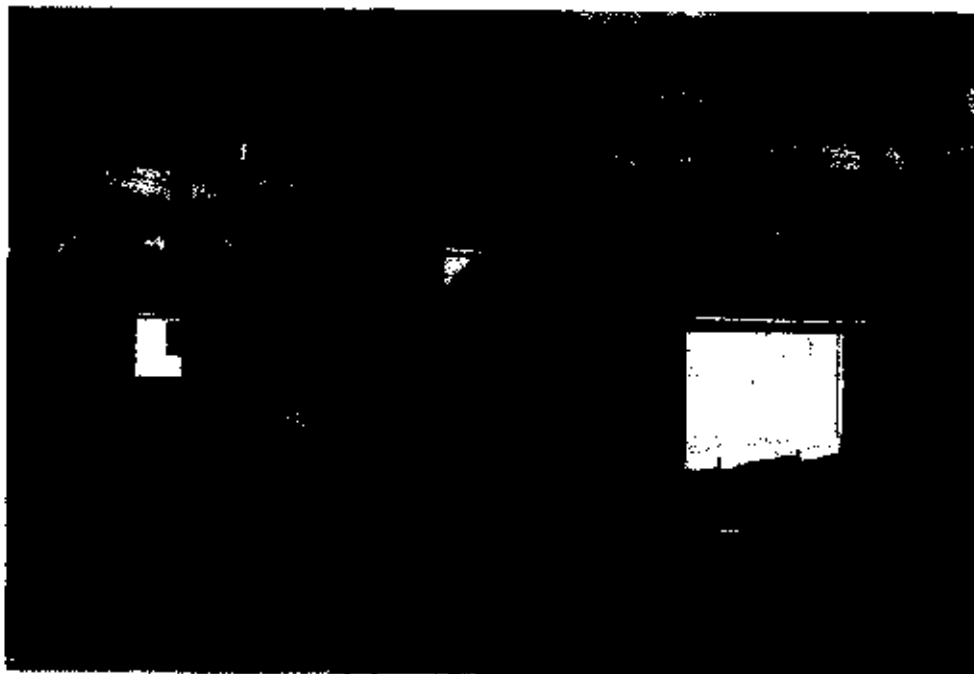
In 1860 the Hudson's Bay trading post had eight different buildings. Study the diagram at the top of the next page. It shows how the buildings were arranged.



Government dock today.



Two older Bay buildings as they stand today. The one on the right is an old store house.



By 1860 the Hudson's Bay post at Berens River was giving jobs to local people. They did many different kinds of work. They worked in the store trading goods for furs. In the spring, summer, and fall, they caught sturgeon and white fish for the winter. They hunted ducks and geese in the fall. They planted and harvested potatoes and other vegetables. They made hay for the cows and horses. They made sleighs, furniture, and tools. They cut enough firewood to heat the stores and their cabins during the winter. They cut enough boards in a saw pit (see page 42) to build new houses and to fence the gardens and pastures. They sealed the buildings with a mixture of mud and straw to keep out the winter cold.

In the winter months they travelled by dog team with store goods to trade for furs at the winter camps of the people. They tended fish nets, and brought in hay, water, and firewood. They looked after the dog teams and the other animals, and they looked after the mail.

Mail was carried out by dog team to Red River and Norway House. The mail for Berens River was brought back to the store from these places.



Resting the Dogs, William Rackham Collection 132
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Here is a picture of a winter mail and freight train. The men were from Berens River. They were resting just a few miles out of Berens River. They travelled the last few miles together and got to Berens River as one big train. Everybody came out to meet them.

William McKay was the Bay manager in 1863. He wrote in his journal on 24 September 1863 that "Jacob Berens, John Williamson, and an Indian boy started for the fall fishing with 19 nets."

In late October they had over four thousand fish in their fish house.

A Village Grows at Berens River

On Friday, 18 December 1863, the same Mr. McKay wrote that, "Thomas Mestegum arrived at the village today. He is on his way to Norway House." This is the first time the word 'village' was used in the Hudson's Bay Company records. A number of families employed by the Bay had moved to Berens River and built houses at the 'Point.' William Berens remembered that his father, Jacob Berens, Old Sauwanas, Old MacDonald, and others had built log cabins by this time. The walls were log, the floors made out of boards, and the roofs covered in bark. The holes between the logs were mudded in the fall to keep out the cold.

Inside there was usually only one big room with a stone or clay fireplace. William Berens remembered that all the other people 'lived in old fashioned wigwams' then.



Inside an old Lodge, c. 1920. Rev. R.T. Chapin Collection, 250-7976
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg)

The Indian and Métis people lived on sturgeon part of the year. William Berens remembered that the sturgeon was caught all summer long.

“It was smoked and pounded well, something like pemmican. That’s what we lived on then,” he said, “berries were our jam, raspberries, saskatoons, strawberries, gooseberries, and blueberries. No one (except the Bay) had gardens in those days.” William also remembered that the Indians people “put up wild rice to take to their traplines.”



A saw pit cutting logs into boards for houses, N54644
(courtesy National Museums of Canada)



Smoking meat or fish. Getting it ready for pounding into pemmican, N45686
(courtesy National Museums of Canada)

Trapping is Important

The people who lived on the traplines were kept very busy too.

On Christmas day, 1863, William McKay wrote in his journal. "Today Fairwind and his family arrived. They brought in 119 beaver, 7 lynx, 1 otter, 1 fisher, and 42 muskrat. The hunt of the man and his family."



Angus Owen, Son of Fairwind, A. Irving Hallowell Photograph,
HBCA Photo Collection, 1987/363-I-84/43,N8915, (courtesy HBCA, PAM)

On February 14, Mr. McKay wrote that, "Bear's son arrived and brought in 4 martin." The next day he wrote that "Alexander Sebaston was off to get rabbits from Bear." Most people still lived at their hunting and fishing camps.

Winter travel was still by snowshoe and dog team. Mr. McKay wrote on March 22, 1864, that, "Chief Factor Graham arrived with 2 carioles and two stages of dogs on his way to Red River." Later on, horses were used to pull the cariole.



A horse pulling a cariole, c. 1923. Rev. R.T. Chapin Collection, 253-8098
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg)

Fun and Feasts

Funny things happened in those days just as they happen today.

On August 20, 1872, the men went to bed in their bunkhouse. Then there was a great thunderstorm. They all woke up very wet and looking at the sky. That night "the wind blew the roof off the men's house."

Another time the Bay manager wrote this in his journal. "William McKay's cow fell in the bog last night. She was stuck there and could not get out. A big rope was tied around the cow. All the men, the women and the children gave a great tug. The cow popped out. Everyone fell down in the bog. They all began to laugh."

The people enjoyed telling and laughing over these stories. They would repeat stories when they met at feasts or celebrations.

There were feasts when babies were born and when people got married. There were feasts when someone had a very good hunt.

There were feasts to celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

One Bay manager wrote in his journal on December 19, "Everyone thinking of Christmas." Then, on December 24, the day before Christmas he wrote that he had a "busy day dishing out grub" and a few candies. There was a feast on Christmas day. He wrote just before the New Year,

Dec 30, "Indians preparing a feast"

Jan 1, "Feast day with the Indian people"

Jan 2, "Day of repentance with some and sore stomach with others."

The Hard Times

There were sad times in those days, too. Here is what was written in the journal one February.

Feb 4, "Sandy and wife and three children sick with measles."

Feb 9, "Mrs. Sandy very ill."

Feb 10, "Sandy's baby found dead."

Feb 11, "Sandy's wife died at 5:30 this morning."

Feb 12, "Sandy's wife buried with baby."

Sandy and two of his children got well, but they were sad and lonely for a long time.

In some years there were fewer fur bearing animals, and so people could not buy the things they needed at the Hudson's Bay post. There were also fewer fish to be caught. People were hungry at those times.

One winter there were almost no animals. The trappers were very hungry. One day in March, the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company store wrote in his journal, "Indians starving." Then He wrote, "Jacob the Chief was here visiting, he is very hard up for something to eat."

William's Hunting Trip With Father

It was about this time that Jacob's young son William took his first real hunting trip with his father. Here is his story just as he told it.



Chief Jacob Berens, 1909
(courtesy Manitoba Archives,
Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

“There is only one thing I will never forget as long as I live. I set a steel trap in an open muskeg in a bluff. About two or three weeks later my father and I went back to the same place again. We were carrying our bedding. I carried one blanket and a tea kettle - not much grub - perhaps a couple of bannocks. We could not see anything to shoot, not even a partridge or rabbit. Lots of atik (caribou) tracks. We followed the tracks everyday but we could not see the animals. I do not know how they knew we were coming. My father was breaking trail in deep snow; for two and a half days we did not eat a mouthful. The first night I was without grub I thought I could not last the whole day. I was that hungry. When two and a half days had

passed we came to the place where I had set this trap. Father said to me, “You better look at it, I'll have a smoke here.” He took off his load and sat on it. I went towards this bluff. Before I could reach there and see my trap, I heard the chain rattling. I knew then I had caught something. When I came close enough to see my trap, I saw a marten trying to get away. There was nothing else for me to do but to try and get the marten before he got away. I knocked it on the head. I shoved him under my capot next to my bosom. I just carried the trap in my hand. My father had never asked me whether I had caught anything when he saw the bare trap. He put his pack on his back and I followed behind. I don't think we had walked 300 yards when I asked him whether a marten is good to eat. He said, “Yes, just as good as a rabbit, why, you got one?” I said, “yes.” “Where is it?” he says. I pulled this marten out of my bosom. “Now, we'll make a fire and have something to eat.” It was easy to skin because it was not frozen. After we ate it, father says, “I guess we better go home.” It was quite a distance to walk; it was between Leaf River and Berens River. We walked all that noon and night; we arrived at home at midnight. Mother gave us whitefish and potatoes - no bannock or butter or any other kind of food.”

NEW WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Archaeologists	People who dig for things left in the ground by other people long ago. They do this to find out how the other people lived, how they got their food and clothing, how they travelled and the kind of houses they lived in.
Capot	An overcoat, usually with a hood on it.
Cariole	A fancy sleigh that people used to ride long ago. It was pulled by dogs or horses.
Century	A period of one hundred years.
Credit and Debt	When trappers got credit at a trading post or store, they were allowed to take the goods they needed to go trapping and pay for them later. They now had a debt. They promised they would pay this debt with the furs they brought to the store after they returned from their trapping trip. As soon as the trappers were given credit, they had a debt to pay.
Forefathers	Our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, as far back as one can go.
Independence	Freedom. When people can look after themselves without help from anyone else, we say they are independent or free.
Inhabitants	The people who live in a place, such as the inhabitants of Berens River or Winnipeg.
Migration	A movement of people or animals a long way to new lands is called a migration. Herds of caribou move across the north every winter. Ducks and geese fly north in the spring and south in autumn. These are animal migrations.
Nation	A large group of people who live together. They sometimes have the same language and the same beliefs. They have their own government, police force, army, stamps, and money. Canada is a nation. The United States is also a nation.

- Pastures** Meadows covered with grass where cows and horses can eat. Often fences are built around them, so that the animals can not wander away.
- Pemmican** Meat which is dried and pounded, then mixed with melted fat and packed into a container of some kind.
- Rogans** Birch bark baskets or containers used long ago to carry or store food.
- Self Sufficient** Being able to get all one's own food, clothing, and shelter without help from other people. People were self sufficient long ago. They made their tools, hunted or gathered their own food, made their own clothes, and built their own houses. They did not depend on others.
- Totem** The emblem of a clan of people who are related to one another. The emblem can be an animal, a bird, or something else to remind the clan of its past.
- Trading Posts** These were stores in the old days where people took their furs to buy some of the things they needed or wanted. Fur was used in the same way we use money today.



Woman Fall, Berens River, 1910, A.V. Thomas Collection 16
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

CHANGE QUICKENS AT BERENS RIVER

When the traders first came to Berens River, everything began to change rapidly. People threw away many of their old tools for the ones the traders brought to them. They started to use guns as well as bows and arrows. They even started to buy some of their clothing at the trading post. But after a while, change slowed down.

For a long time things stayed much the same from year to year. Then, changes again began to happen quickly at Berens River. This happened about a hundred and twenty years ago.

The First Christian Missionaries Arrive



Reverend Egerton Ryerson Young
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index,
University of Winnipeg)

Before the traders came, the Saulteaux people had their own way of praying to God. For a long time, the Saulteaux prayed in the old ways and had their own ceremonies. Then Christian missionaries came with new ideas.

Timothy Bear was the first preacher at Berens River. Then, Rev. E. R. Young and Martin Paupanekis from Norway House arrived in Berens River to start a mission. Together they helped to build a school house which was used as a church on Sundays. There was a mission house for Reverend Young and Mr. Paupanekis, too. There were sixty people living in Berens River when the mission opened in 1873. The rest of the people lived in small bands scattered far and wide.

Rev. Mr. Young visited Jack Head, Berens River, and Poplar River to preach to the people. He travelled to the winter camps. The people slowly gave up some of the old ways and accepted the new beliefs.

The missionaries taught the people to believe in new ways of praying to God. Some started to go to church and became Christians. They went there to get married and have their children baptised. When someone died, they gathered at the church for the funeral.

Not all people believed. Some stayed with the old ways, but most people slowly became Christians. On Sundays they went to church. There was prayer and hymn singing. Going to church was like having a feast. All the people got together. Sometimes jokes were played on one another. Funny stories were told.

The First School

The missionaries built the first school with the help of the people. When it was too small, the people built and paid for a new school. That was in the year 1892. Schools then were called Day Schools.

The new school was bigger. It was built with logs and boards. There was one big classroom. There were few books, no pencils, paper, or erasers. Children wrote on slate boards. Slate boards were like chalk boards. Desks were two-seaters. Two children sat side by side at each desk. All grades were in the one classroom.

A school inspector visited the school at Berens River a hundred years ago. He said, "There were seventeen pupils, five girls and twelve boys. The youngest was six, the oldest was fourteen." There was only one teacher, who spoke only English. The students could only speak Saulteaux. There was a wood stove in the centre of the classroom and a water bucket in one corner. There was an outhouse instead of an indoor toilet.



School Days, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

William Berens said that he “went to school one winter and part of a summer. And after I went to school for about six months, then I was working and quit school. I don’t believe I went to school more than two years altogether. I finished the third book and then taught myself on top of that. I learned more myself than in school. I’m sorry that I never had the chance as the boys have today.”

More went on at school than just lessons. Pupils had games at recess time and after school. They had spelling bees and art competitions.

There were picnics, field days, and concerts. There was always a Halloween Party on October 31.



A Halloween Skating Party
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

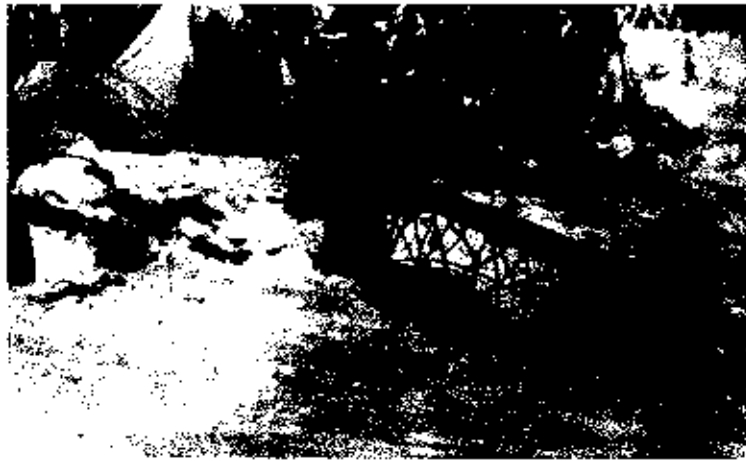


Swimming at Sandy Bar
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

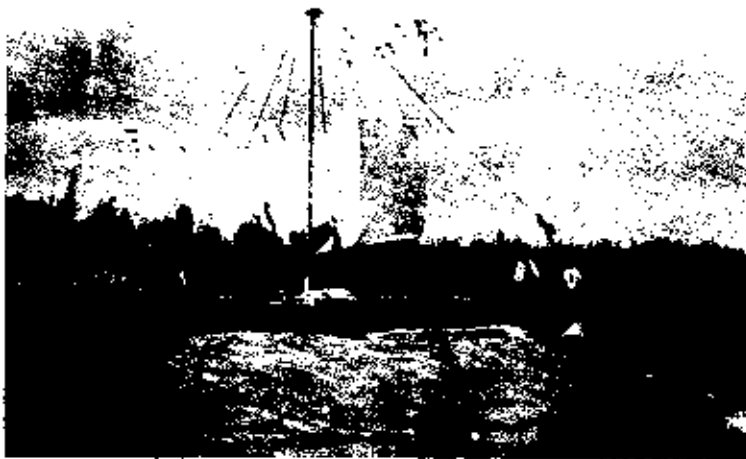
A special concert and party was held at Christmas time, with cake, candy, and presents. New Year’s Day was a holiday but a feast was held at the school to celebrate the day. Everybody was there.

The First Steam Boats

Other things were changing, too. When Donald Sutherland built the Hudson’s Bay post at Berens River in 1815 there were no missions or schools. All travel was by canoe in summer, by snowshoe or dog sled in winter. Later, York boats were used to carry most of the trade goods and furs of the Hudson’s Bay Company.



Dog sled upside down at a winter camp, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



The last York boat on Lake Winnipeg, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Then about a hundred years ago the first big steamboats started carrying freight and passengers on Lake Winnipeg.

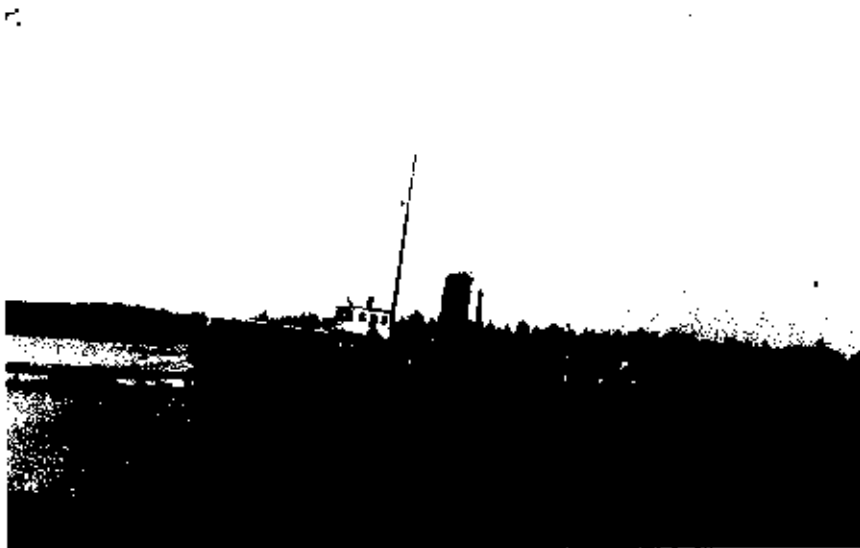
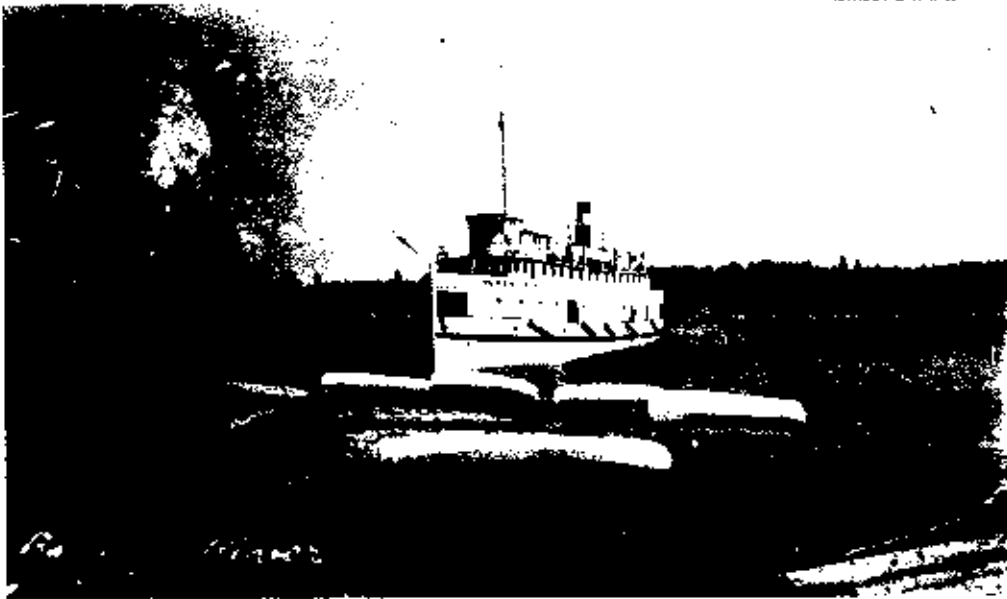
There were many steamers over the years. Here are some of the names:

The Colville	Lady of the Lake
The Grand Rapids	Keenora
The Highlander	Wolverine
The Glendevon	Viking

These were big ships. They carried much freight. They needed plenty of firewood for their steam boilers.

Freighting Becomes Important

These boats provided work for the people at Berens River. Men were needed to carry the freight, cut the firewood, and catch fish to send down to Winnipeg.



Courtesy Oblate Brothers

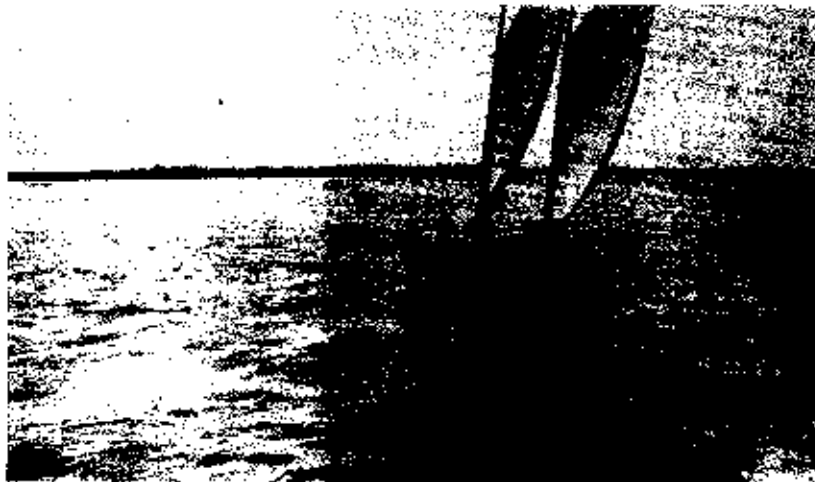
Berens River became a freighting and firewood centre. It was just about half way between Norway House and Winnipeg, so it was a good place for steamers to pick up firewood. Berens River was also the freight centre for Little Grand Rapids and Deer Lake. All the freight for these communities was unloaded at Berens River. Then it was put into canoes and York Boats and taken up the river to Little Grand Rapids and to Deer Lake.



Unloading freight at Berens River, G. W. Malaher Collection 23, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Commercial Fishing Begins

Commercial fishing started up, too. Fresh fish were put on ice and sent to Winnipeg by steamer. So there was even more work for people at Berens River - putting up ice in the ice house, fishing, fixing nets, even making skiffs and yawls.



A small Fishing Schooner, Joannidi Collection 490
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

The Signing of the Treaty

The biggest event of the old days was the signing of the Treaty.

This took place 19 September 1875.

By Treaty, the Indian people of Berens River gave "to Her Majesty the Queen of England...forever...all the rights, titles,... to (their) land." In return the Band was given the Berens River Reserve, a "medicine box", and schools. "Treaty money" of five dollars was to be paid every year to each "man, woman, and child" on the reserve. Also, the Queen gave the people cows and horses, and tools to farm the land.

The Indian people were guaranteed the right to hunt and fish their traditional lands forever.

Look again at the map of the drainage basin on page 12. The drainage basin marks the boundary line of the Traditional Indian Lands. This is a very large area.

The traditional lands also include the islands at the mouth of Berens River and Berens Island, too.

Here is the story of the first treaty day as it was told by a ten year old boy, William Berens.

"I learned the white ways from my mother and the Indian ways from my grandparents on my father's side so I know what both are like.

"I think it was the summer after the church was built and the missionaries came that people began coming to Berens River from every direction. They came from across the lake at Jack Head, from Hole River and Bloodvein on the south, Poplar River on the north and down the river from the east. The people were talking about the great Queen who was buying the country. I began to wake up a little now. I was curious to know what was going to be. A council meeting was held pretty near every second day. People were talking about "Treaty" debt. It looked as if they expected to get something. I was pretty sure that something was going to happen but I didn't understand just what it all meant.

"On the 19th day of September, 1875 -- I know that date well now -- I was asleep in the wigwam. Suddenly a sound woke me -- a sound I had never heard before. I used to hear my grandmother talk about a windigo and the terrible shouts he made. So I wondered if it could be a windigo, and I was a little scared. I heard the sound four

times. And I heard my mother get up. Then I heard a man speaking from outside the wigwam. He said "Jacob" -- that was my father -- "are you up?" "Yes," said my father. "There is the boat," the man said, "It's out at Barrel Rock whistling for a pilot." So my father got four men and went in a skiff to bring in the boat.

"By the time I got up I heard everyone shouting, 'Ktciogima is coming! The Queen is going to buy the country from us!' A couple of hours after, John Wiskis and I were watching the mouth of the river. We saw something coming around the point. Everybody was out at that time to see this monster boat that was coming in the river blowing her whistle. There was great excitement. The boat dropped her anchor right in the centre of the Berens River harbour. A York boat was sent out to get the men who were sent by the great Queen. There was Lieutenant-Governor [Alexander] Morris and the Honourable James McKay, the interpreter. The Indian Agent was aboard too, but at that time he was just a common clerk. Two of the daughters of the Lieutenant-Governor were in the party, too.

"The York boat did not head for the Company's post but the Indian camp. My father was standing on the bank waiting to meet the party and I was standing beside him. As soon as the boat pulled in, those five people walked up to my father -- the two ladies and the three men. I was fooled though. When I saw the man with the big stomach, well dressed with a gold watch chain, I thought he was the big boss. But this man was the interpreter. I did not expect to hear a white man speak my language but this interpreter said to my father, 'Our great mother Queen Victoria has sent us to make a bargain with you about your country.' Then the Lieutenant-Governor walked up and stretched out his hand to my father. The first thing he said was, 'My grandfather had an Indian name -- his name was 'Sakigizik' (standing up and reaching the sky).' Then he told my father to go to the mission house. I went along with my father. When he got there, he opened the mission warehouse. I saw them pitch out little yellow looking sacks -- a big bunch of them. They were hams. Once my father was asked whether there were enough. 'No!' he said, 'I have a big crowd to feed.' So they pitched out some more. There were about 30 sacks of flour taken out, too. After the grub was distributed, there was a council meeting in the mission house. The Treaty was signed about midnight.

"I don't know what time my father got back home that night. When I got awake the next morning and got up, I saw some new clothing lying there by my father -- a red fancy coat and dark blue pants, socks, and boots. There was also a flag and a medal! I heard people say then that my father had been elected chief.

"Next day there was a lot of trading. There were at least ten traders besides the Company. I saw some new things then. Some of the traders had different kinds of



Treaty Payments at Berens River, c. 1925, N3580
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

candy. The Company only carried peppermints, and this was the first time I saw marbles and hats for boys. The traders were only there for one day; then they left.

“The next summer when the second treaty payment was made, the Inland Indians from Little Grand Rapids and Pekangikum came down to the mouth of the river to be paid. The Poplar River people came here, too. This continued for quite a few years. My father was the Chief of the whole bunch of them. There were no separate bands then as there are now.”

Berens River Grows

The new jobs, freighting, cutting firewood for the big boats, fishing for the fish companies, and treaty meant that more people left their hunting grounds and built log homes at Berens River.

The land was dug up and vegetables planted. Stanley Disbrowe said that when he was a young boy all the people of Berens River, Indian and Métis, had big gardens, like farms. He said that the people got good crops off their land, too.

In the fall the gardens were harvested and the potatoes and other vegetables stored in root cellars for the winter. The people had hay fields to feed their cattle and horses.



Cattle and horses at the Mission, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

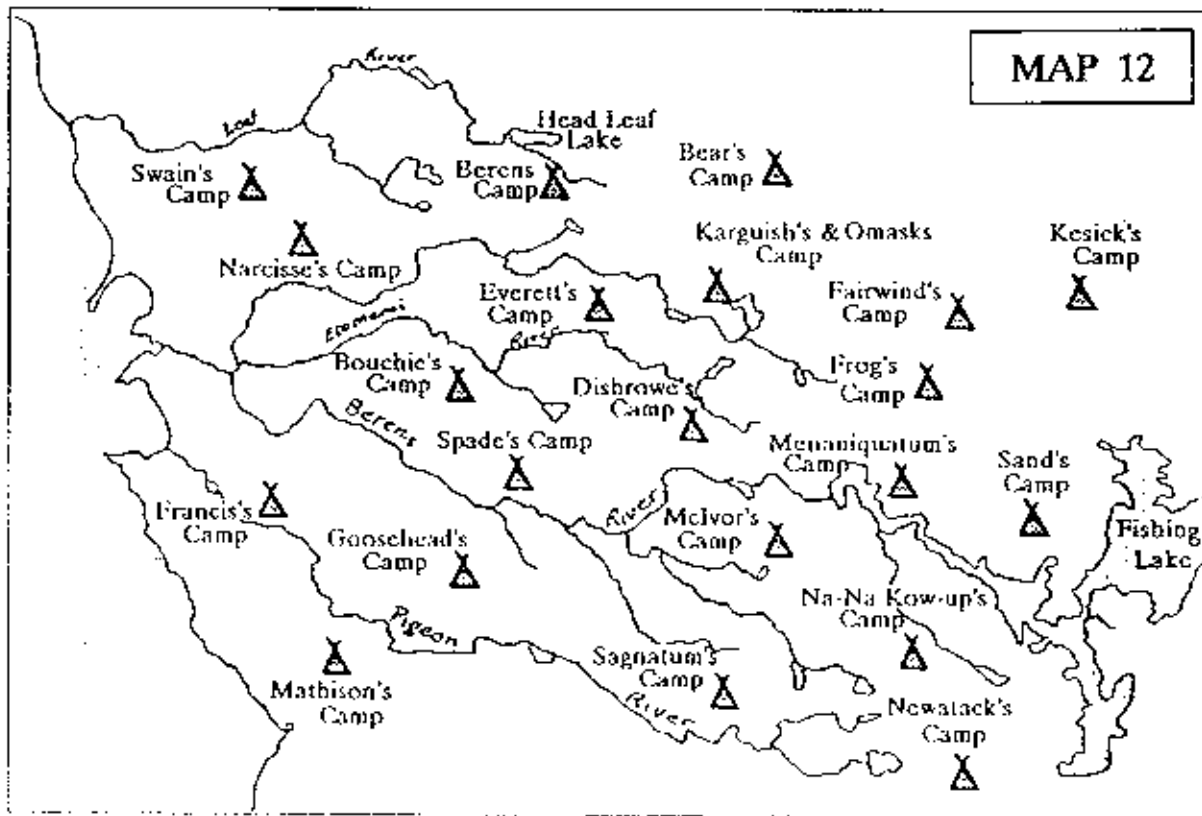
In the winter time many families still went to live on their traplines. The forest still gave some food, clothing, and shelter for a good life.

On the next page are the names of some of the trappers and hunters in the Berens River Area over a hundred years ago. Study these names, then check on the map to see where some of their camps were. Ask the elders who these people were. Perhaps you are related to them.

The Bear and his Sons
 Karguish
 Omask
 Frog and his Sons
 Spade
 Fairwind and his Sons
 Goosehead and his Sons
 Jacob Berens, the Chief,
 and his Sons
 Kewatenase (Northwind)
 Little Duck and his Brother
 Menaniquatum
 Murdock McIvor
 Young Clark (One Hand)
 Newatack (Old Man)

Kesick
 The Sand
 The Snuff (Old Man, his Son
 and Step Son
 Turtle and his Brother
 Sagnatum (Broken Back)
 Na-Na-Kow-up
 Sawanash
 Ochepatoos
 Ashowash
 Sow-Kee-wat-um

Some of the names of workers around the trading post were Swain, Everett, Moar, Monias, Bouchie, Narcisse, Francis, Mathison, and Disbrowe. Mr. Disbrowe was the manager for many years.



Berens River, Pigeon River, and Little Grand Rapids Trapping and Hunting Camps.
 (information courtesy Edmund, Gordon, and Percy Berens)

About ninety years ago the Indian Agent at Berens River wrote that, "Fishing and freighting for the Hudson's Bay Company in summer, and hunting and trapping in winter are the main occupations of the Berens River Indians." He also noted that the, "Houses are good, being built of fine large logs, nicely hewed. Nearly all of them are shingled. The stables are mostly small, very few cattle being kept. A number of houses are whitewashed with lime and present a pleasant appearance. Twelve new houses are being built. The new school is finished."



People in front of their log houses at Berens River in the early 1900s
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Do you remember what the word 'century' means?

We have read about the Berens River community from about 1800 to 1900 - a hundred years or a century. We have seen how some things changed during those years. And we have seen how other things did not change.

The people of Berens River still lived off the land. Fishing, hunting, and trapping provided just about all the food the people needed. The forest gave them log cabins and bark wigwams. Clothing was still being made from animal skins. The family, the band, and the land were the most important things in the lives of our great-grandparents.

But many things had changed. There was a church now. There was a school. And by 1900 there were many new jobs for the people at Berens River.



A Berens River trapper with beaver, muskrat, fox, fisher, wolf, and a bear skin.
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

NEW WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Dynamite	A material like gun powder used to blow up or move rocks, trees, or other things that are in the way.
Christian	Someone who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in books such as the Bible.
Economic Development Projects	These are plans which are set up to help provide more jobs for the people, so that they can meet their own needs.
Harvest	To collect wild berries, garden vegetables, animal furs, logs, or any other useful thing for food, clothing, and shelter.
Missionary	A priest or minister of the church. Missionaries brought a new religion to the people of Berens River.
Residential School	A place where children lived during the school year. They left their families in the Fall and returned the following summer. They ate their meals at the school and slept in the dormitories at night. Besides their school work, they also worked in the gardens, and looked after cattle and horses.
Root Cellar	A deep warm hole in the ground covered over with logs and earth. It helps to keep garden vegetables like potatoes from freezing in the winter time.
Schooner	A large sailboat ten to twenty metres long.
Skiffs	Small flat-bottomed boats used around the reserve.
Slate Boards	These were small blackboards used by pupils in school long ago. Paper was too expensive to be used in schools then.
Steamship or Steamboat	A large boat with an engine that used steam power. The steam was made by heating water using firewood instead of gasoline.
Yawls	Large boats used by fishermen who travelled far out on the lake.

BERENS RIVER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Some Things Stay the Same

1900 was the beginning of the twentieth Century. Berens River was still a small place then. Indian and Métis Families were large, and many people still lived off the land. The land provided berries and wild rice. It also provided logs and boards for houses and firewood to keep the people warm. The hunters and fishermen still fished and hunted.

More families had gardens, and grew vegetables like potatoes, carrots, and onions. Some had pigs and chickens; others had cows.

The Hudson's Bay Company store still sold axes, saws, needles, blankets, salt, flour, sugar, and clothes. And it still gave these things on credit to the trappers in exchange for their furs. The Bay also sold things to the people for the money they had earned freighting, guiding, cutting firewood, carrying the mail, working on the boats, or doing other jobs.

Nearly all the people in the community went to church on Sunday. They sang and prayed together. After church people had tea and cookies. Sometimes the children were given candy, but not often. There were weddings and christenings. There were Sunday School concerts, socials, and dances.



Square dancing at Treaty time, 1932, G. W. Malaher Collection 22
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

There were feasts, too, to celebrate special events. One Bay manager wrote in his journal "Big feast and dance at the Fort in honor of the marriage today." There were church and school picnics. And summer carnivals at Treaty time with races, baseball, soccer, jigging, and square dancing. Christmas Day and New Year's were days for visiting and community gatherings just as they had been for a long time.

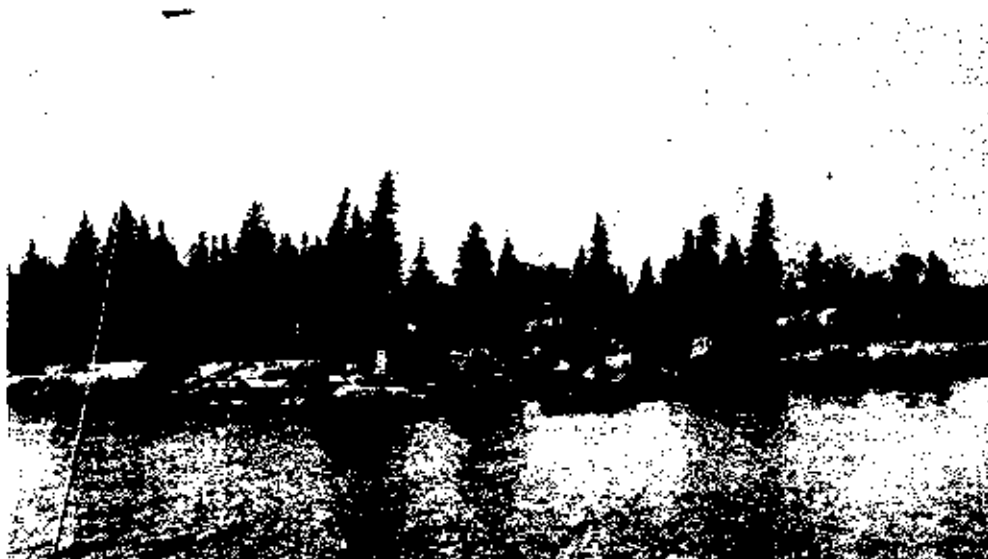
But changes were happening, too.

The Fish Hatchery, and other Changes in Fishing

Around 1900 a fish hatchery was built on the reserve, just across the water from the Bay. The idea was to make sure there would always be plenty of fish in the lake. The hatchery took the eggs of fish (roe) and kept them in containers until they were hatched into little fish. Then they were put back into the lake to grow even bigger. When big enough the fishermen would catch and sell them. The hatchery stayed open for a number of years. It gave work to a few people.

About the same time two fish stations were opened at Berens River. One was located on Sheep Island in the mouth of the river and the other at Yankee Island.

These stations changed the way people fished. A big boat with a gasoline engine would pull four, five, or six yawls out to the nets. The men would lift their nets, set them again, and then get a tow back to the station.



Berens River Fishing Station, 1922, Joannidi Collection 577
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

At the station their catch would be weighed and the fishermen might get as much as \$15.00 or \$20.00 for their catch. On a really lucky day a man might earn \$50.00.



A Tender at the fish plant with freight, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Winter fishing began at about this time, too. Fishermen stayed at Berens River most of the winter. They did not go to their traplines.

The Reserve Expands

People who lived almost year round in Berens River started gardens and raised farm animals. Around 1910 the band got some land at Pigeon River called Reserve 13A. The purpose was to give the people good hayland for the cows and horses. There was very little good farmland in the basin.

Schools Improve

There was no high school at Berens River, so students had to leave the community if they wanted to go to high school. Reverend McLachlan, the church missionary, arranged to have a few children go out to a boarding school. Each September a number of children went out to school. Rev. McLachlan went with them.

One year a tragedy occurred. A group of children left in a small boat, because they could not catch the big lake steamer. There were storms on the lake during the next few days. When the children did not arrive in Selkirk, people began to worry. Search parties started looking for the missing children and the minister. When they finally discovered them, they found that they had drowned.

The Bay Journal for Friday, October 11, reads "Highlander arrived in morning with the bodies of Reverend McLachlan and 6 Indian children." They were all buried in Berens River.

In 1918, the Roman Catholic Church built a school. The school teacher was Brother Leach. He taught for many years. The people of Berens River liked Brother Leach.



R.C. Day School, 1920s or 30s, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Mr. Colin Street was the teacher at the Methodist School for many years. He was a very good teacher, too. He is remembered by many elders today.

For many years Roman Catholic students went to their school, and Methodist students went to their school. Then, the schools were joined together and run by the Department of Indian Affairs.

The people of Berens River decided to join Frontier School Division in 1967. A new school was built. Later, it was made larger because there were more students.

Transportation changes, too.

The big lake boats like the Highlander, the Keenora, and the Lady of the Lake slowly put an end to the York boat freighting on Lake Winnipeg. Big boats could carry more freight than a York boat. They were faster, too. The last York boat sailed Lake Winnipeg around 1921. It is shown on page 52.

The birchbark canoe was replaced by the canvas canoe. These were called Peterborough canoes. They were factory made in Peterborough, Ontario.

Around 1930 small gas engines called 'kickers' were fastened to canvas canoes or the new wooden fishing yawls. Now fishermen and freighters could go faster and further than before.

Just when the big lake boats replaced the York boats on Lake Winnipeg, the first airplanes landed at Berens River.

Look at these early airplanes pictured below and on the top of the next page. How are they different from the airplanes that carry freight and passengers to Berens River today?



Vickers Vedette Aircraft at Berens River, July 1930, 1389-411445
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)



A Fairchild 82 Aircraft and the Keenora at Berens River, August 1937, 1379 - 41192
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)

An airplane that can only land and take off on water is called a seaplane. Later, wheels were put on these old seaplanes so they could land and take off from both water and land. These planes were called amphibians.

The big yellow and red water bombers used to fight forest fires around Berens River are amphibians. They can land and take off from water or from land.



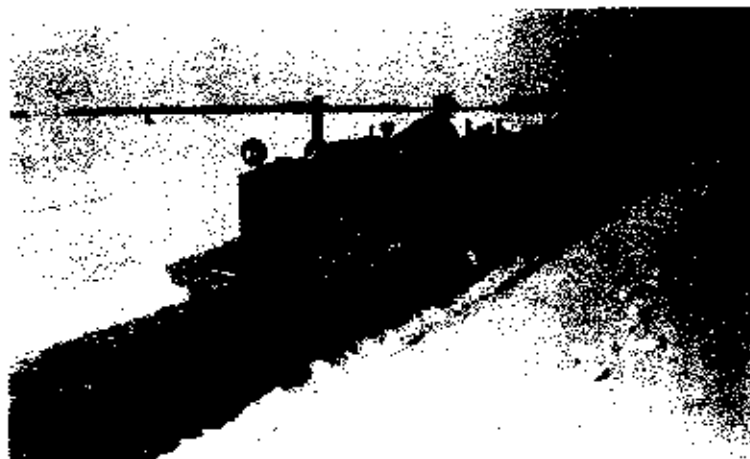
A water bomber getting ready to fight fire near Berens River in June, 1989.

During the long, cold winters, boats could not sail on the lake. In those days airplanes could not fly in the cold. So dog teams or trains hauled the mail and some freight across the lake.



Father de Grand Pré about to cross an ice ridge on Lake Winnipeg, 1930s
(courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Later sleighs pulled by teams of horses were used for a few years. Tractor trains started freighting around 1930. When the big lake boats were frozen in the ice, the tractor trains carried the freight over the snow and ice to Berens River. Later, winter roads were built through the forests, and semi-trailers replaced the tractor trains.



A Tractor Train, 1934, 145 - 4564, (courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)

The Danger of Thin Ice.



Above: Tractor being brought up on Clearwater Lake, 1938, 145 - 4573, (courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)

Right: Tractor falls through ice at Pine Lake on trip to Berens River Mine, 1939, Richardson Collection, 145 - 4570, (courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)



Winter road trims costs

Seasonal link delivers year-round benefits to northern community

By John Lyons
Winnipeg Free Press

LITTLE GRAND RAPIDS — The road to this northern community is open only a few months, but its benefits are felt year-round.

From The Bay store to the band office, the winter road is essential to trim the costs of living in a remote community served solely by plane for much of the year.

"We depend on the road quite a bit; it's the cheapest way to bring in heavy goods," said Bruce Armstrong, manager of The Bay store serving Little Grand Rapids, 270 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg, near the Ontario boundary.

"Sugar, flour, baking powder, we receive a full year's supply. We're charged by the pound for heavy items. On a 20-pound bag of flour, we save \$4 with the road."

Last week, Armstrong had already received four truckloads of supplies at his store, located in a Metis community across Family Lake from the Little Grand Rapids reserve.

In all, 1,200 kilometres of winter road wind through northeastern Manitoba. Permanent roads thread their way through much of the northwest, eliminating the need for a seasonal network there.

Communities linked

North of Thompson, a 60-kilometre stretch of winter road links Split Lake and Ilford. A separate 300-kilometre road connects Cross Lake, Oxford House, Gods Lake Narrows and Gods River.

By far the largest single winter road, however, is the 800-kilometre

stretch from Hole River, 150 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg, through Island Lake to Red Sucker Lake. A western branch of this road hugs the Lake Winnipeg shore, serving the communities of Bloodvein, Berens River and Poplar River.

A twisting, mainly one-lane stretch snakes east off the main road, through woods and frozen muskeg and across lake ice, passing through Little Grand Rapids before ending at Paungassi.

Community residents here use the road to bring in personal caches of gasoline and other supplies. The RCMP and Department of Natural Resources do the same, and also take the opportunity to bring trucks and snowmobiles south for servicing.

A gravel-crushing crew, which moved its equipment in on the road, was to have crushed 17,373 metres by mid-week, mainly for the band. Building supplies for summer are evident throughout the reserve, brought in by the truckload.

Bootlegging cited

For Armstrong, almost every item in The Bay is brought in on the road, including furniture and six-month supplies of canned goods and paper products. Only produce and other perishables, which are likely to freeze and spoil on the trucks, are flown in year-round, he said.

Despite the easy access the road provides, bootlegging doesn't greatly increase while the road is in place, RCMP Const. Dave Lower said. Bootleggers are more likely to charter a plane to Bissett for a liquor run than drive whisky in on the road, he said.



New Ways of Communication

Over the years people at Berens River have had to communicate with people far away. At first they wrote letters, but the mail was slow, so it took months to hear back. Sometime after the first airplanes arrived in Berens River, the Air Force built a signal station behind the Hudson's Bay Store. Messages could now be sent in Morse Code. This meant that people at the store, the fish station, or on one of the big boats could speak to other people in Winnipeg.

Ordering supplies and attending to emergencies was now much easier and quicker.

In 1920, the signal station was used to help get supplies and experts in to fight a very serious forest fire.

In the big city stores, people were able to buy battery-operated radios. Radio messages were broadcast to the North in those early days by CBC. Some people used to stay up late at night to hear the messages.

Then in 1950 the radio telephone came to Berens River. There were only a few sets on the reserve at that time. The radio telephone was like a 'walkie-talkie'. People in Berens River could talk to people far away in Norway House or in Winnipeg.

In 1968 Berens River got electricity. This brought about a really big change in the way people lived. People bought toasters, washing machines, electric heaters, light bulbs, tape players, and radios. Finally, telephones and televisions came to Berens River, too.

The Great Depression and other Problems

Let's go back in time again to the 1930s. Life was especially difficult everywhere in those days. People all over the world were very poor. There was no rain for crops. Farmers had nothing to sell. Since they could not sell anything they had no money to buy things with.

When business is very bad, it is called a depression.

The depression made people in Berens River very poor, too. Trappers got very little money for furs. Fishermen got very little money for fish. People in Winnipeg and other places no longer had money to buy furs or fish.

There were a large number of really bad forest fires in those years, too. These forest fires burned all summer long and some were still burning when winter came. Forests were destroyed and animals became very scarce.

One of the worst forest fires was in 1940. It almost destroyed Berens River. Some houses were burnt. A couple of the buildings at the Roman Catholic Mission burnt, too. But no lives were lost.

Somehow families worked together and shared, so that no one went hungry for too long. There was even a chance for some new kinds of work.

Ma Kemp Arrives

In 1930, 'Ma' and George Kemp opened the Log Cabin Inn. Tourists and sports fishermen began to visit Berens River. They needed guides to take them fishing, and cooks to make the meals. So there were new jobs for people who wanted this kind of work.



Log Cabin Inn, c. 1933, Kemp Family Collection 32
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

The Berens River Gold Mine

During these same years, prospectors came through Berens River looking for gold. They finally found some a long way up the river. They called it the Berens River Gold Mine.

Again, Berens River became an important freighting centre. All the mining equipment: cement, drills, motors, dynamite, tractors, and other things came to Berens River on big lake boats. All this mining equipment was put in store houses at Berens River. Some smaller things went to the mine in freight canoes. After freeze-up, the heavy things were sent by tractor train to the mine site.

The mine had jobs for many people. There was a road to be cut through the bush.

The Hudson's Bay Company Trading Post was still the only big store in Berens River in the 1930s. It looked after some of the freighting, too, and had jobs for the people.

A big dam had to be built near the mine. There were bunk houses to be built, goods to be freighted, and many people had to be fed.

One prospector claimed that he had discovered gold. He was very generous. He gave parts of his claim to people in Berens River. They had to pay him a few dollars so he could register their share of the gold mine. After everyone had paid him to register the claims, the prospector left. No one ever saw him again. He had not discovered gold, but he had made some money.



Damming the river for electricity near the Berens River Mine
(courtesy Stanley Disbrowe)

Changes in Government

One big change to take place in Berens River was the way the Chief and Councillors did their job.

Berens River has had many good leaders. The first was Chief Jacob Berens. He became chief in 1876 and remained the chief of Berens River Band until he died in 1917. How many years was he chief?

His son William Berens was chief from 1917 until 1949. How many years was William chief?

Since 1949, there have been quite a few chiefs. They include William Swain, William Donald Berens, Stanley Ross, Everyn Felix, Sandy George Patrick, Harold McKay, James Swain, James Semple, Lester Everett, and Andrew Bittern.

Who is the chief today? Who was the chief before him/her?



A successful Moose Hunt, 1989. Kneeling left to right: Edmund Berens, Councillor, and Lester Everett, Chief, Berens River First Nation. Standing: Georgia Clarkson, Jack Clarkson, Mayor, Berens River Non-Treaty Community, and Margaret Everett.

Long ago the Bay and the government expected the chiefs to do what the company and the government wanted. That has changed now. Today the chiefs and councils have more say in the affairs of their community.

Long ago, the chief had a special tent at Treaty time. Today, the Chief and Council have a band office.



The new Band Office, 1991.

Long ago the chief had few helpers. Today, there are councillors, clerks to keep records, band managers to watch over the money, constables to keep the peace, and many others.

Running a Band is a big job, with lots of homework and many problems.

The biggest problem today is finding jobs for all the people.

When every man was a fisherman and trapper, people were able to look after themselves and their families. Then the population grew very fast. The land could no longer provide all the food, clothing, and shelter needed. Freighting, farming, gardening, commercial fishing, tourism, and forestry became more important to the people. People wanted to provide for themselves and their families and for those who needed help.

Each chief tried very hard to get new jobs for the people. Over the years they got more jobs, and they took more control of things that the government used to do for them.

Let's look at the things the community leaders started or helped to start.

Economic Development Projects

Chief William Swain started a logging business in partnership with Indian Affairs in 1957. It was an excellent project, but it did not work out at that time.

Then in 1960 when Stanley Ross was chief, the Berens River Pulpwood Co-op was started with help from the government. This was a good project. It ended after a few years, but it got started again when Harold McKay was chief. It was given a new name, The Channel Area Loggers.

The logs were cut and trucked to the store. There each one and one-half cords was dumped into a 'banding bin' where the logs were tied into bundles. Then the bundles were put together into a huge log boom and hauled by tug to Abitibi Price Pulp and Paper Mill at Pine Falls.



Stockpiling logs for booming to Pine Falls, July 1977, 1056 - 31660
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)



Filling up the boom for towing to Pine Falls, July, 1977, 1056 - 31658
(courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index)

Logs have been cut for many years in the basin of the Pigeon and Berens Rivers. Channel Area Loggers sent as many as 20,000 cords of pulpwood to Pine Falls in one year before it was shut down in 1991. Now logging will be done by a number of local contractors.

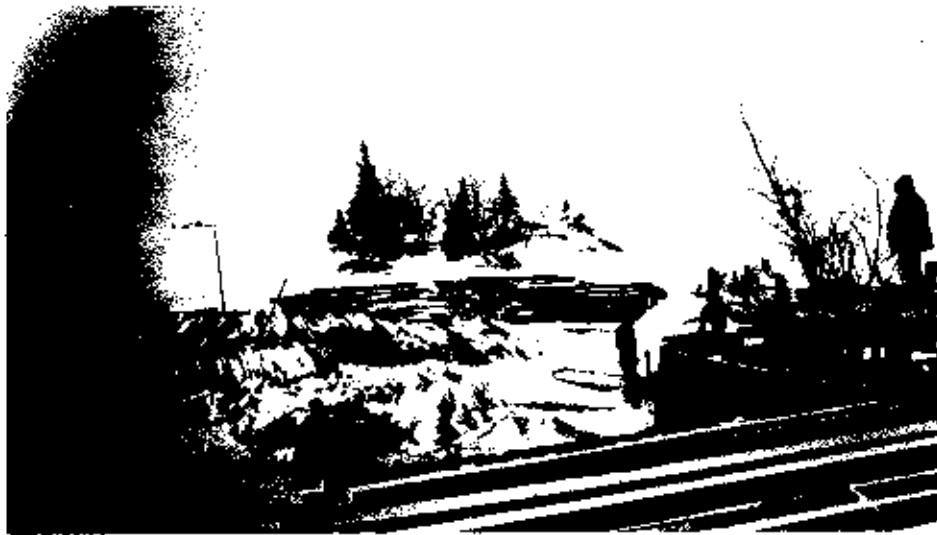
There have been lumbering projects too. Logs have been cut into boards for housing and other buildings.



A picture of an open air saw mill taken after 1950. The men operating the mill are from left to right: Hughie Robinson, Brother Cartier, and Tommy Whiskis. (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



Another saw mill picture with a different crew. The men are from left to right: Harry Bittern, (Louis George?), Brother Cartier, Boniface Baptiste (Gerard Patrick?), and Alexander Berens (Tommy Whiskis?) (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



Another view showing the logs still to be cut into boards for houses, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

When James Swain was chief a small farm project was started on an island in the Pigeon River. This island is about 15 kilometers up the river. Here an attempt was made to raise enough food for the people on the reserve. Forty acres of land on the island was cleared. It was good hay land. Twenty beef cows were brought in and put on the island.

Another piece of land was cleared and dug up, so that vegetables could be grown. Again the government helped get the project started. The small farm did not succeed, even though it was a good idea.

New Businesses Open

During the 1970s and 1980s new stores were built, and new businesses started. Restaurants and gas stations were operated by people in the community.



Inside Alix Store, 1989



Wesley Flett gassing up the Water Truck at the pumps.

In the 1970s a Fisherman's Co-op was started, and a new fish plant was built on Sigurdsson Island. The plant was sold to the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Board in 1983. Now it is run by the Band.

Commercial fishing is the most important industry in Berens River today. There are eighty-one registered fishermen. Many fathers fish to earn the money they need to feed and look after their families. The fish they catch also feed hungry people in other parts of Canada and in the United States.



The Fish Plant today



Adam McDonald, a fisherman from Berens River, on his way to lift his nets.

The Trappers' Association

A Trappers' Association was formed to help trappers. It gave prizes to the best trapper every year. In 1972, Percy Berens was the top trapper. He was awarded the prize that year. It was a 30-30 Winchester rifle.

Do you know any other top trappers in Berens River?

Percy Berens, best trapper in 1972, with his prize 30-30 rifle.



What did young people do thirty years ago?

Well, they went to school. But they did other things, too. They played outside, skating on the river or at the rink. Of course, they had to work together beforehand to clean the rink. Sliding was fun, too, and less work. You did not have to shovel snow to go tobogganing or sliding. Finding and following rabbit tracks and setting snares could be a mixture of fun and work. So was helping mom at home, looking after younger brothers and sisters, getting wood for the stove, hauling water, and going to the store for groceries.

Getting up early in the morning and going to school was always hard to do. But harder in the old days. Boys and girls who lived across the river did not come across to school at freeze-up or break-up because there was no bridge. For a while two nuns taught across on the south side during those times. Instead of buses, boats and bombardiers were used to transport the children.

There were many things to do in the community, too. There were baseball and soccer games between the fishermen and freighters, and between the Berens River Bears and the crews of the big lake boats. The Berens River Bears usually won. The pictures below and on the next page show some of the things boys and girls your age did twenty or thirty years ago.



The school playground, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



A school skating party, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



Sledding, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Summary

Over the years Berens River has changed a great deal. Two hundred years ago there was nothing in Berens River during the winter except a single Hudson's Bay Company trading post. There were hunting and fishing camps along the shores of the rivers and lakes.

Then a few log houses were built around Berens River and around Canoe Making Creek. The Bay store got bigger and more houses were built.

Some Berens River people started to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. Others started freighting.

A mission was built, then a school.

Big lake boats came to Berens River.

The Treaty was signed.

Soon most people had log houses in Berens River and log cabins on their traplines.

Most of the food they ate still came from the land, but more people started to live around the Hudson's Bay Post in Berens River.

Fishing became a big business. There were two fishing stations built at Berens River.

Another mission was built.

"Ma" Kemp came and opened a lodge for tourists. Then electricity came to Berens River, and housework was made easier for moms.

The chiefs and councils started new businesses like logging, gardening, tourism, and farming. They saw to it that the people had better houses, better roads, a good hospital, and a nursing station.

Travel changed over the years, too. At first, there were only birch bark canoes and snowshoes to help people go from one place to another. Today, we have cars, trucks, snowmobiles, and yawls with big outboard motors. Airplanes have replaced the big

lake boats of yesterday, just as the lake boats had replaced the old York boats.

Can you imagine what Berens River will be like when you are twenty or thirty years old? Try to guess what your community will be like then. What changes do you foresee?

What would you like Berens River Community to be like when you grow up? What changes would you like to see? Can you help make them happen?

Remember, your community today is what your grandparents have made it.

We know who some of these grandparents are because the elders remember the past and the Hudson's Bay Post used to keep a daily journal of the things that happened.



The Hudson's Bay Post , 1928, 84 - 588, (Hudson's Bay Company Archives
Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

The Hudson's Bay Company journals tell about Berens River people during the depression years. Some have been listed below. Are you related to any of these people?

Arthur Sawanash
Elijah Baptiste
William Everett
James Ross
William Berens (Chief)
Dixon Flett

Isaac Bear
Antoine Bittern
Tache McKay
Arthur Felix
Cubby Green
Charlie Whiteway



**A Replica of Berens River Fort rebuilt as a tourist attraction in the 1950s
(courtesy Winnifred Kuldys)**

This brings us to the end of our story of Berens River from 1900 almost to now. Here is a list of twenty important things that changed Berens River during those years:

1. A fish hatchery was built and two commercial fishing stations were opened at Berens River.
2. The Pigeon River haylands became part of the Berens River Reserve.
3. Children started going out to boarding school. There was a very bad accident and six children drowned.
4. A Roman Catholic Mission and school were built, so there were two churches and two schools.
5. York boat freighting on Lake Winnipeg ended in 1921.
6. The first airplanes started flying in with government agents, surveyors, fire fighters, and other people in the 1920s.
7. Chief Jacob Berens died. William Berens became the new chief.

8. The Royal Canadian Air Force built a signal station behind the Bay store.
9. The big lake boats continued to sail Lake Winnipeg carrying freight, iced fish, and passengers. Some of these passengers were tourists.
10. Tractor trains started hauling freight during the winter months.
11. There were serious forest fires in the 1930s, but the worst one was in 1940 when some parts of Berens River were burnt to the ground.
12. Ma Kemp's Log Cabin Inn was built in the early 1930s, and this started the tourist trade.
13. Gold was discovered 240 kilometres up the Berens River. It was called the Berens River Gold Mine. Berens River became the big freighting center for the mine.
14. A few people had radios and they listened to radio programs in the evenings.
15. A new two-room day school was built in 1938.
16. A residential school was built in 1936 by the Roman Catholic Mission. It was not a success, so it was made into a hospital in September, 1937. It lasted until 1974 when a government nursing station was built. Now the old hospital is North Country Homes, a hotel operated by Jack and Georgia Clarkson.
17. Berens River got electricity in the 1960s just 30 years ago.
18. Frontier School Division took over the schools and built a new school in the 1970s.
19. The Chief and Council took control of things like roads, housing, welfare, and economic development.
20. There were quite a few economic development projects. Some of these projects are listed below:
 - a. Fish plants and fish co-ops
 - b. Trapper's co-ops
 - c. A wood cutting co-op
 - d. A beef cattle experiment
 - e. Tourism projects

You are not expected to remember all these things. If you can remember even a few, you will know a little of what the elders saw. For they saw Berens River grow and change during this century.

NEW WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Amphibians	Airplanes that can take off or land on both land and water.
The Great Depression	During the 1930s almost all people were poor. There were few jobs anywhere for people.
Prospector	A person who looks for valuable minerals in the rocks of the earth.
Roe	Fish eggs.
Sea Planes	Airplanes that can only land and take off from water.
Team of Horses	Two or more horses working together to haul logs, hay or other things.

UNIT 3: MEETING NEEDS AND WANTS IN THE COMMUNITY

What is a Need?

A need is something we must have, so that we can do something else. For example, what must we have in order to stay alive? The answer is simple. We must have air, water, food, clothing, and shelter (a house to live in). We need these things, so that we can live. Without them we would die.

Can you think of other examples?

Suppose your teacher assigned you a page of math questions to do for homework. What would you need to do the work?

What are some things a fisherman needs, so that he can fish?

List some of the things a trapper needs, so that he can trap?

What are some things parents need if their children are to be cared for?

Needs are necessary. If we want to do anything, there are certain things we need for the job.

What is a Want?

A want is different from a need. A want is something we really do not need, but it would be nice to have.

For example, we all need to have shelter from the winter cold. We need something to protect us from freezing. A wigwam is a shelter. So is a log house. And a palace is a very large shelter indeed. You might **want** to live in a palace with a thousand rooms, but you do not **need** all that space to protect you from the cold. A wigwam would do just fine.

Let's make a list of some of the things you might want. You might want candies, ice cream, or chips to eat.

You might want a Barbie doll or a dog to play with. You might want to watch a T.V. program or stay up late at night. You might want your mother or grandmother to win a lottery so they would have lots of money.

Wants are usually nice things to have, but things we can get along without. We will not die if we do not have them. We will not be stopped from doing our work if we do not have them.

Needs are things we must have to survive or to do the things we have to do.

Our Community helps us to meet our Needs and Wants

Do you remember what our definition of a community was? We said it was a place where people lived, worked, and played. It is also the place where we meet our needs and wants. Do you remember what boys and girls your age did on traplines long ago?

The boys and girls helped as much as they could. Boys got the water and wood, and checked the fish holes and snares. Girls got wood and water, too, and they also helped their mothers snare rabbits and get food ready to eat. They helped make clothes and often looked after the babies. What were the needs these boys and girls were helping to meet?

Dads and grandfathers were the hunters and trappers. They also built shelters and log cabins. Mothers and grandmothers made clothing from the hides and furs of animals caught for food. What needs were parents and grandparents helping to meet?

The family group was a small community. The forest and lakes gave it all the things it needed to survive. The family depended on each person's help to get what was needed from the land. Mothers and fathers depended on the boys and girls in the family to do many things. They needed each other, so that they could survive.

Here is a picture from long ago. What has the mother done to make sure her baby will be warm in the coming winter? Can you see what the child is wearing on her hands and feet? Is there anything in the picture that shows what the father has done so the family can travel back to Berens River in the spring? How has each parent helped to meet a family need?



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Here is another picture from long ago.



courtesy Winnifred Kuldys

Study the picture carefully. Note the flat roof, and the big logs used to build the walls of the cabin. Did the trapper use an axe or a saw to cut the logs? What need was he trying to meet by building this cabin?

Interdependence: Depending on each other to meet our Needs and Wants

We can see how long ago people depended on each other to help the family survive. They needed each other.

We depend on different people to do things for us today. And they depend on us to do things for them. This dependence on each other is called **interdependence**.

Think about the people who help us: parents, storekeepers, nurses, dentists, mechanics, bus drivers, and others. How do they help us to meet our needs and wants? And how do we help them meet their needs and wants?

Plan a class picnic. You will need food such as hot-dogs, buns, and relish. You will have to buy these from the storekeeper. You depend on him. But the storekeeper depends on you, too. He must sell his food to make money, so that he can meet his needs. Therefore, he depends on you. Because you depend on him to buy food and he depends on you to sell food, we say you are **interdependent**.

Suppose you and your father go to get firewood. When you get home with a load of wood, you trade it with your neighbour for a tub of fish. You depend on your neighbour for fish. Your neighbour depends on you for wood. We say you are dependent on each other. You are **interdependent**.

Make a list of all the games you like to play. Does your list include games such as hockey, baseball, tag, racing, playing checkers, playing house, and soccer?

Could you play any of these games if you were the only person in your school or your community? Do you depend on your friends to have a hockey game? Do they depend on you?

Can you think of other examples in Berens River where people are **interdependent**?

Draw a map of your community. Mark on your home, the church you go to, the recreation grounds, the road to school, the stores, the nursing station or clinic, the homes of your friends, the homes of your grandparents and important community places. Show where you play hockey, where you go swimming, and where you go for walks and bike rides. Draw lines from your home to all the places you think are important. Do the lines tell you anything about your dependence on others? Look at the map of your best friends. Are the lines on their maps the same as on yours?

Do your lines and your friends' lines tell anything about how we depend on each other? Now do you know why people live in communities?

Study the pictures below and on the following pages. What needs and wants are the people meeting? They seem to show that people want to be together. Is that a need or a want?



Duck Hunting Party, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



A Picnic Long Ago, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

George Whiteway on the left and George Disbrowe on the right with Mike Whiteway in the middle, about to go on a long fishing trip. Do they look happy? How would you feel if you were there, too?



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Are there different hockey teams in the community? Do they play games against each other? Do some of your fathers (brothers or sisters) play on these teams? Do you ever go to see the games? What other things do the people of Berens River Community gather together to do? Are people meeting their needs or wants when they do these things? Are they dependent upon each other? Are they interdependent?

Why do people do these things? It seems people have a need to be with other people. Our needs and our wants are the reasons why we live in communities.

Ken and Dick Berens sawing firewood. This work is easier and much faster if it is done with others. What need is it meeting?



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Meeting Needs and Wants Today

Years ago, as we have seen, the small family looked after all its own needs and wants. Shelter, food, clothing, religion, and entertainment were all looked after by children, parents, and grandparents. This was so for both the Métis and the Saulteaux families at Berens River.

Today many things are different.

We are much more interdependent today. We depend on other people and other places for many of our wants and needs. We get most of our food from stores. Some materials for building homes come from the big stores in Selkirk and Winnipeg. Much of our entertainment comes from radio, t.v., records, or tapes.

Many of the things we want and need come from outside the community. Cars and trucks come from far away places. So do skidoos, boats, outboard motors, gasoline, and oil.

People in other places also depend on the people in Berens River.

Your fathers and grandfathers may be fishermen. They catch fish. The fish are put

on ice at the fish plant, then sent to be processed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board in Transcona. From there the fish is sent out to the stores. People in Winnipeg and Selkirk buy the fish caught in Berens River. They cook it and eat it. So their need for food is provided for by the fishermen of Berens River.

Logs cut in the basin of the Pigeon and Berens River are sent to Pine Falls. The small logs are used to make paper. The big logs are used to make boards for building houses. The houses provide shelter for people and shelter is a very important need.

The few trappers who still work the old family traplines send their fur to Winnipeg where it is made into fur coats. Berens River trappers provide some of the clothing people in Winnipeg need.

So we depend on people to send us things we want or need, and they depend on us to send them things they want or need, too.

We have seen that there have been changes in many things over the years.

Long ago the family worked together for all its needs and wants. By providing all their own needs and wants, people were self-sufficient and independent.

People did just about everything for themselves. They got their own food, built their own houses, and made their own clothing. They provided their own entertainment (in the days before electricity, radio, t.v., and hi-fi's), their own medicine, and their own religion.

Everyone agrees there have been great changes over the years since Donald Sutherland built a Hudson's Bay Company Trading Post at Berens River in 1815. But people haven't changed altogether. They still have the same need for food, clothing, and shelter as they did in those days long ago.

Meeting Needs in Our Community Today and in the Future

What are the most important needs of our community today? What do you think? What do people need most of all?

One of the most important needs is work for everyone, so that each family can meet its needs and wants.

Make a list of jobs a person might work at in the Berens River area. Don't forget the seasonal jobs.

Now when the list is complete, choose one job you would like to know more about. Choose a friend who is interested in the same job. Make a list of questions. See if you and your friend can find answers to the questions about the job.

The chief and mayor are extremely important because they help to make things happen. They can help people get jobs by having economic development projects. Can you think of some projects that might create new jobs?

What about a beef cattle ranch on that island in the Pigeon River?

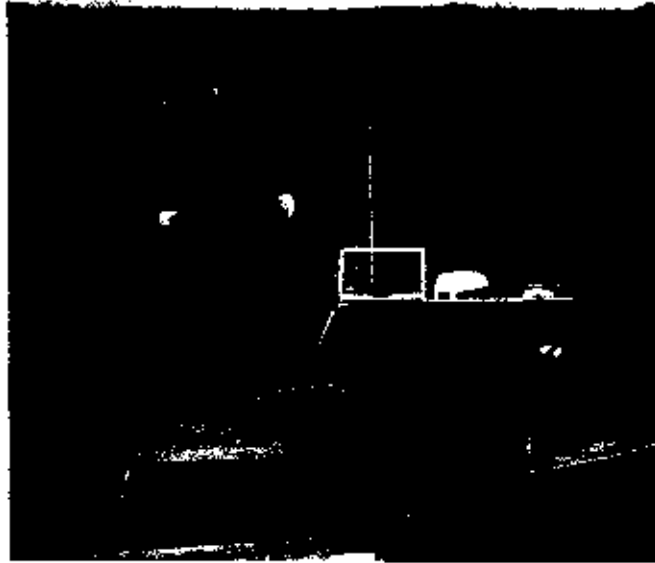
What about gardens for vegetables? What about a hunting lodge?

Are there things like firewood and Christmas trees that could be sent back to Winnipeg on the semi-trailers that bring in winter freight?

Look at the pictures on the following pages. They show what people do to get what they need as well as what they just want.



Chief Everett and Mayor Clarkson after a successful moose hunt.



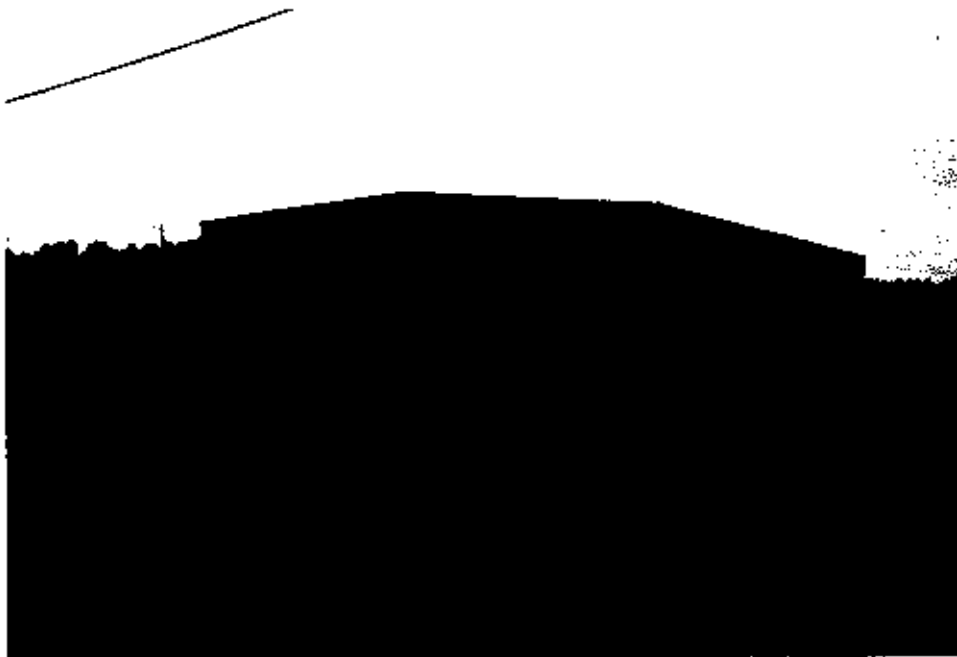
A fisherman at the plant after a hard day of work.



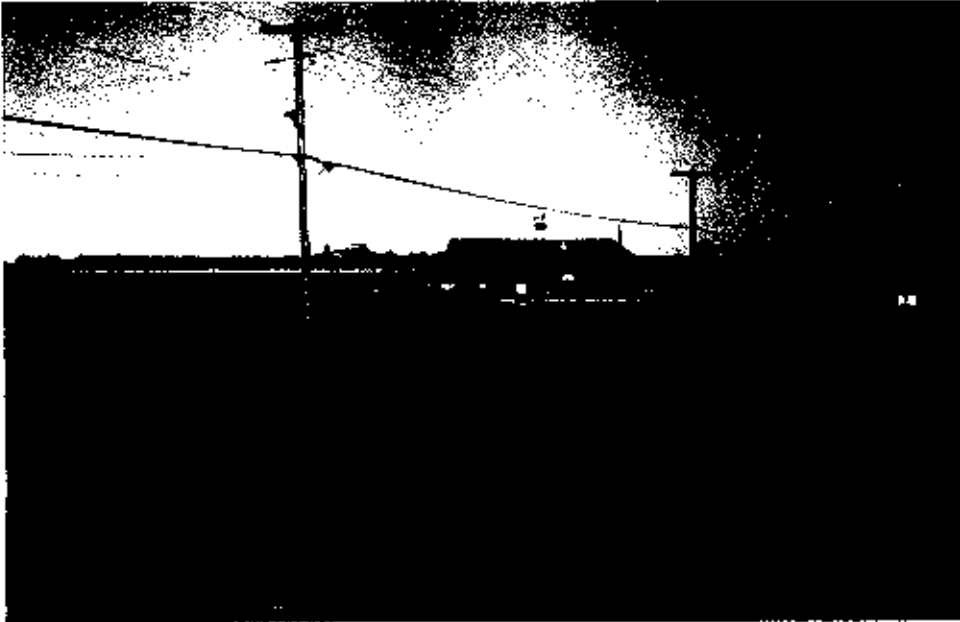
Inside the Alix Store



Road Work Equipment.



Berens River Memorial Arena



The School.



New Houses Under Construction



Pulp wood ready to send south.



Unloading Cement for New Arena and Rink.

ACTIVITIES

1. Dependence Exercise:

Copy the outline below in your exercise book and then complete the exercise. Give at least five examples of your own under columns A, B, and C.

Fill in the information asked for in each column.

A	B	C
Things I Can do for myself	Things I Cannot do for myself	Who do I need to help me do things I cannot do for myself?
Example:		
Skate	Drive a bus	Bus driver

2. Interdependence Exercise:

Copy the outline below in your exercise book and then complete. Give at least five examples under the appropriate columns.

A	B	C
a. Goods/Services from outside Berens River	Where they come from	How they are brought to us
Example:		
Gas	Alberta oil wells	Pipeline/tanker truck

	A	B	C
b.	Goods/Services sent out from Berens River	Where they are sent	How they are sent out
	Example:		
	Fish	Winnipeg	Boat



Berens River from the Air, N11890, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

NEW WORDS

WORD

DEFINITION

Depend

To need help from other people. When people cannot do things for themselves, then they must depend on others to help. Children depend on parents for food, shelter, and clothing until they are old enough to look after themselves.

Interdependence

Today people depend on each other for some of their needs and wants. This is called interdependence. The people of Winnipeg depend on the people in Berens River for fish, and the people in Berens River depend on the people of Winnipeg for things like clothing and bread.

Needs

Needs are things we must have to live or to do our jobs properly.

Wants

Wants are things that are nice to have, but we can live without.

Self-sufficient

A family is self-sufficient when it provides for all the needs and wants of each person in it without help from anyone else.

Independent

A family (or a person) is independent when it does not need help from anyone in meeting all its needs and wants.

UNIT 4: COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

Cooperation

What does the word cooperation mean? Look up the meaning in New Words, page 116. When you help get firewood, wash dishes, or watch the baby, you are cooperating. When you loan your skates, lend a pencil to a friend, or help someone with a problem, you are cooperating. Do you usually cooperate with others?

Berens River is made up of two communities. Most of the Treaty people live on the reserve. Most of the Non-Treaty people live off the reserve at the townsite or on the south side. People who live together in a community need to cooperate. They have to work together for the good of all.



Playing together.

The school in Berens River was built because the Treaty and Non-Treaty people were able to cooperate.



Treaty and Non-Treaty children sharing the same school.



A volunteer teacher helping instruct adult classes at the Town Hall (above), and another view of our school, the main entrance (on top of next page.)



Think of examples where you can cooperate at home or at school.

Would examples of cooperation today be very different from examples of long ago? Below is a picture of Marlene Felix looking after her young brother, David. She is helping her mom and having fun at the same time.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Tell the class about a time when you worked or played with other boys or girls as a team.

There are many stories about the way the people at Berens River have cooperated to get things done. Can you think of an example to tell to the class?

Here are some old stories of cooperation.

New Year's Day was a big feast day for all the people at Berens River. The feasts were often held at the school.

Around 1900, the daughter of the Indian Agent wrote in her diary that the Métis and Indian people provided all the meat and fish for the feast, and the white people provided all the bread, cakes, and pies. She said that the cooperation was just wonderful.

Here's a story of a different kind of cooperation.

One New Year's, a woman cooked thirty pies. The pies were left in her kitchen to be ready for the feast the next day. There was a very bad storm that night. The door blew open after everyone had gone to bed. The woman did not notice right away. When she did, she told her husband to get up and close it. In the morning, she found all her pies were gone. There was not one of them to be seen. What do you suppose had happened? Who had taken them? The man and his wife did not know.

The woman got busy and cooked as many new pies as she could. They took them to the feast.

Late that night, her husband went out to feed the dogs. He called them. They came, but not one was hungry. They all had round swollen tummys. Why?

How did the dogs "cooperate"?

Here is another story of helping, sharing, and cooperating.

Once a trader from the Bay store was sent out to get the furs from a number of trappers. He travelled hard from early morning until late at night. When he arrived at the first camp, he found the family of the trapper in great need. The trapper had died after an accident. The mother and two children were cold and starving. The trader unloaded his sleigh with what food he had for himself. Then he loaded the mother and her children and turned his dog team around. He drove all night and into

the next day back to Berens River. There the mother and her children were looked after by the people. They were saved because of the trader.

After a short rest the trader started out again to do his job. He felt good because he had saved the lives of three of his people.

In what way does this story show cooperation?

The people of Berens River often work together cooperatively to make things like winter carnival, school concerts, and Treaty Days as good as they can be. Again they cooperate by sharing and helping each other.

They cooperate and share when there are problems, too.

At the time of the big forest fires in the 1940s, the people all worked together as hard as they could. In one instance, they cut fire breaks between the town and the fire. The fire got so close many were forced to flee to the islands. But working together they saved most of the homes in Berens River.



Log Cabin Lodge, 1940

The Log Cabin Lodge and the Store were saved, but seven houses were burnt. After the fire, the people got together and helped to rebuild their community.

Years ago in the days of the big steamboats, Berens River had a baseball team. Each steamboat had a baseball team. Games were played on a baseball diamond close to the Bay. The Berens River Bears usually won. They had some really good players. Would they have won, if they had not cooperated with one another? If they had not played as a team?

If you are ever on a team, like in hockey or baseball, you must cooperate with the other players if your team is going to have fun and maybe win a cup.

The Fisherman's Co-op is a good example of cooperation. The fishermen work together so they can catch fish and get a good price for them. The Berens River Trappers' Association does the same thing for trappers.

In 1977, there was a gasoline sniffing incident in Berens River. Two young people died. This was very sad. The chief, mayor, and councils, principal and teachers of the school, superintendent, parents, and The Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba started a school program. The program told the students about the very bad things that gasoline sniffing and drugs can do to you. The gasoline sniffing soon stopped.

There are other ways people can cooperate. Can you think of examples?

How can we help "Smokey the Bear" protect our forest and the wildlife that lives in the forest?



How can we help to keep our homes, school, and community clean and healthy?

Describe the kind of community you would like to live in.

If you were the Chief of Berens River Indian Reserve or the Mayor of the Berens River Community, what changes would you make to improve your community? Does there need to be cooperation to make improvements?

Conflict

Conflict is different from cooperation. Do you sometimes have arguments with your best friend? Are there times when you and your best friend are no longer friends, even for a little while?

Do you sometimes argue with your sisters or brothers? Do you ever argue with your parents? Do you ever have fights or differences with other children when you are at school? These are called conflicts. There are other ways to act. Let's take a look at conflicts.

Boys and girls can get into conflicts over a great many things. The following things might start fights or conflicts:

- when others borrow or take things that belong to you.
- when someone picks on one of your friends.
- when a person will not share.

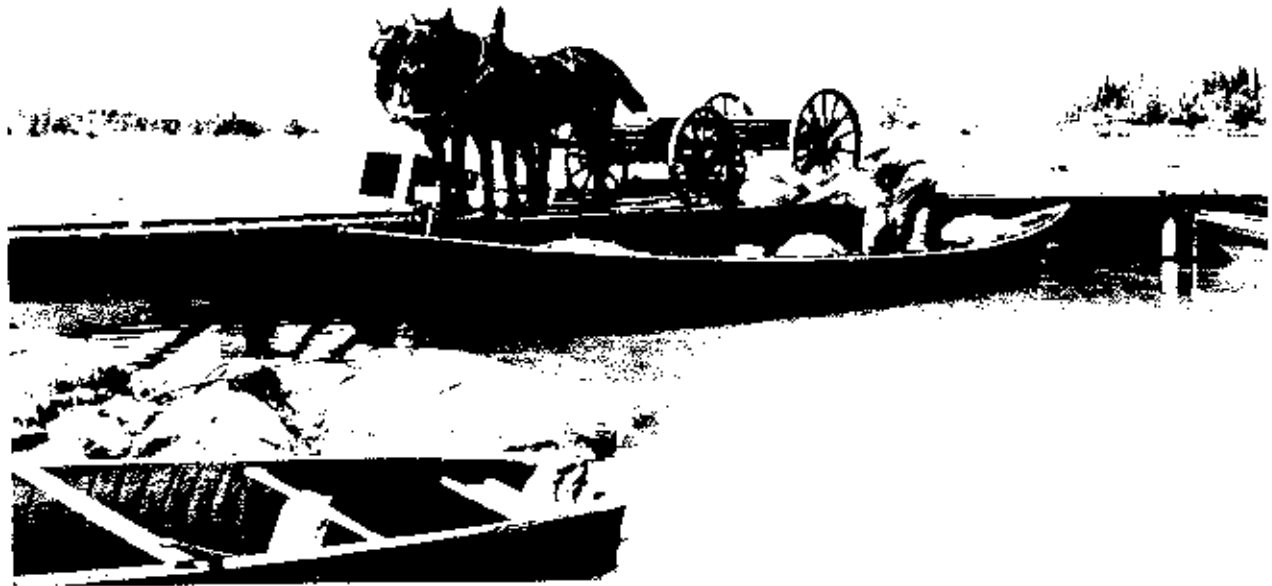
Can you think of others?

Older people have conflicts, too. Brother Leach was the local judge or magistrate in Berens River long ago. This is a story about conflict he told.

Two families went out hunting. The husbands worked together and shot a moose. The meat was shared, but a conflict started between their wives over who owned the moose hide. Both women wanted the hide, but their husbands refused to get into the fight.

Finally, the wives took the conflict to Bro. Leach. At first, he could not decide who should have the hide.

He thought about the problem for a long time. Then he knew what to do. Can you figure it out?



Cooperation at its best. The two men are working together to unload the York boats. The team of horses waits for the load to be put on the wagon. The horses will work as a team with the driver to take the load up to the store, N202, (courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Solving Conflict by Cooperation

Brother Leach asked the clerk of the court for a pair of scissors. He cut the hide into two equal parts. He gave each wife one half of the moose hide. The wives were both very happy. The fight was over.

This is a good example of how a conflict can be settled using the wisdom of older people. The wives solved their conflict by cooperating with the magistrate.

Are there things in your community today that can cause conflict? What about jobs and who gets the jobs? What about things like roads, housing, alcohol, and gambling? Even religion has caused conflicts between adults.

Just because there are differences between people does not mean there has to be conflict between them. Long ago, the churches used to quarrel with one another. Even in Berens River this happened. But not always.

Here is a story about two men who went to different churches, but they did not fight about it. Back around 1930, the Bay manager went to one church. His best friend went to a different church. These two old friends often met to talk and play cards.

The Bay manager had a big smelly old cat. It was always eating the food in the store. He could not stand this old cat. He wanted to get rid of it. Finally, one day, he gave the cat to his friend as a joke. "I will let the old cat eat my friend's food," he said to himself.

Later the cat became a mother and came back to the Bay manager with all its kittens. There was more food at the store than his friend's house. Everybody knew that the cat had kittens and that it had gone back to the Bay. The manager could not get rid of it now because people would think he was cruel.

So he just accepted it. But as a joke, he said that mean, old cat must have come home because she didn't like his friend's church.

This is an example of different beliefs getting along together and making jokes about their differences.

What happens when fights start around the school or in the classroom? What does your teacher do? What does the principal do? What would your mom or dad do if they heard you had been in a fight at school?

Sometimes a whole community can get upset about things. Here is an example.

About a hundred years ago, fishing was very bad. Too many fish were being taken out of the lake. This caused a conflict between the fishermen of Berens River and fishermen who came from far away to fish.

Chief Jacob Berens and his council listened to the people. Then they asked the government to do something to protect the fishing. The government made rules. The fishing was saved. This conflict was solved when all the people cooperated with one another and went to the government.

A fish hatchery was even built at Berens River. This was to help add to the number of fish in the lake so that in time there would be lots of fish again.

There have been quite a few conflicts between the people and the government. In 1977, there was a big conflict between the Band and the government over the condition of the roads and the money needed to fix them. The roads were not safe

to travel on. The government refused to help.

The chief and council closed the school because school bus travel was not safe.

Soon the people in the government learned the school was closed. The newspapers also told the story of the Berens River Roads to the people of Canada. Before long, the government found some money, and the roads were fixed.

So another local problem was solved.

Read the story in the newspaper about the school "holiday" in 1977.

Berens River students return

Students from the Berens River Indian band were back in school Wednesday after being kept out since August 29 over a road dispute.

Band Chief James Swain said in Winnipeg Wednesday the 350 children were sent back to school because a seven-mile road on the reserve is being repaired by government workers.

He said the road was unsafe for school buses without repairs.

"They're fixing the culverts right now and then

they're going to put gravel on top. They're doing a pretty good job," said the chief.

But he said he is concerned the problem may recur if the reserve gets a heavy rainfall before gravel is put on the road. If that happens the children may have to be withdrawn again from school "for a day or two."

Chief Swain is meeting with Indian affairs officials Wednesday and today to see if they can provide the gravel needed for the road. He said the band has only 200 square yards of gravel to put on the road surface.

"I didn't have much luck today," the chief said Wednesday.

He said he has the full backing of the students' parents. The reserve has been asking for road improvements for four or five years.

The Winnipeg Tribune, 22 Sep 1977, p.4

Not all conflicts in Berens River have been settled as easily.

When we try to settle fights or conflicts we must often rely on the wisdom of our elders.

What is the opposite of conflict? Cooperation of course.

Over the years, there have been conflicts at Berens River just as there have been conflicts in most other communities, large and small. But there have been more times when people have cooperated with each other for the good of all.

How can we cooperate to make things better for everybody at home? on the school bus? at school? in the community?



Working Together on a Dam for the Berens River Gold Mine
(courtesy Stanley Disbrowe [the man on the right] of Berens River)

ACTIVITIES

1. How in the old days did boys and girls co-operate and help their parents on the trapline or at the family fish camp?
2. How do boys and girls cooperate around the home today to help their parents?
3. What is the difference between competition and conflict?

If one player trips another and a fist fight starts, is the fight competition or conflict?

If the gym teacher has everyone in the class run around the gym to see who is the fastest, is that competition or conflict?

What if one child pushes another at the start line? Is that competition or conflict?

4. We all want to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours. Sometimes we or our neighbours can do things that can start arguments or conflicts.

Give examples of things you might do that your neighbour might not like. Give examples of things your neighbours might do that you and your parents might not like.

5. If we are to live in peace and harmony with nature and with others then we must co-operate and help.

Give examples of how you can help:

- the forests,
- the animals in the forests,
- your parents,
- your school,
- your neighbours, and
- your community.

6. Are there any old names of places in the Berens River area that tell about people co-operating? Are there any that tell about conflict?

NEW WORDS

WORD

DEFINITION

Cooperation

Cooperation is sharing things and doing things together. It is team work. It is being helpful in a group.

Conflict

Argument and quarrelling between people over differences. It is the opposite of cooperation.

Uncooperative

Unwilling to share with others and help when a group of people wants to do something.

Judge or Magistrate

Is the person in charge when court is held.

Competition

A struggle between two or more people for the same thing. For example, when ten students run in a race, we say they are in a competition. They are competing to see who can get the first prize.

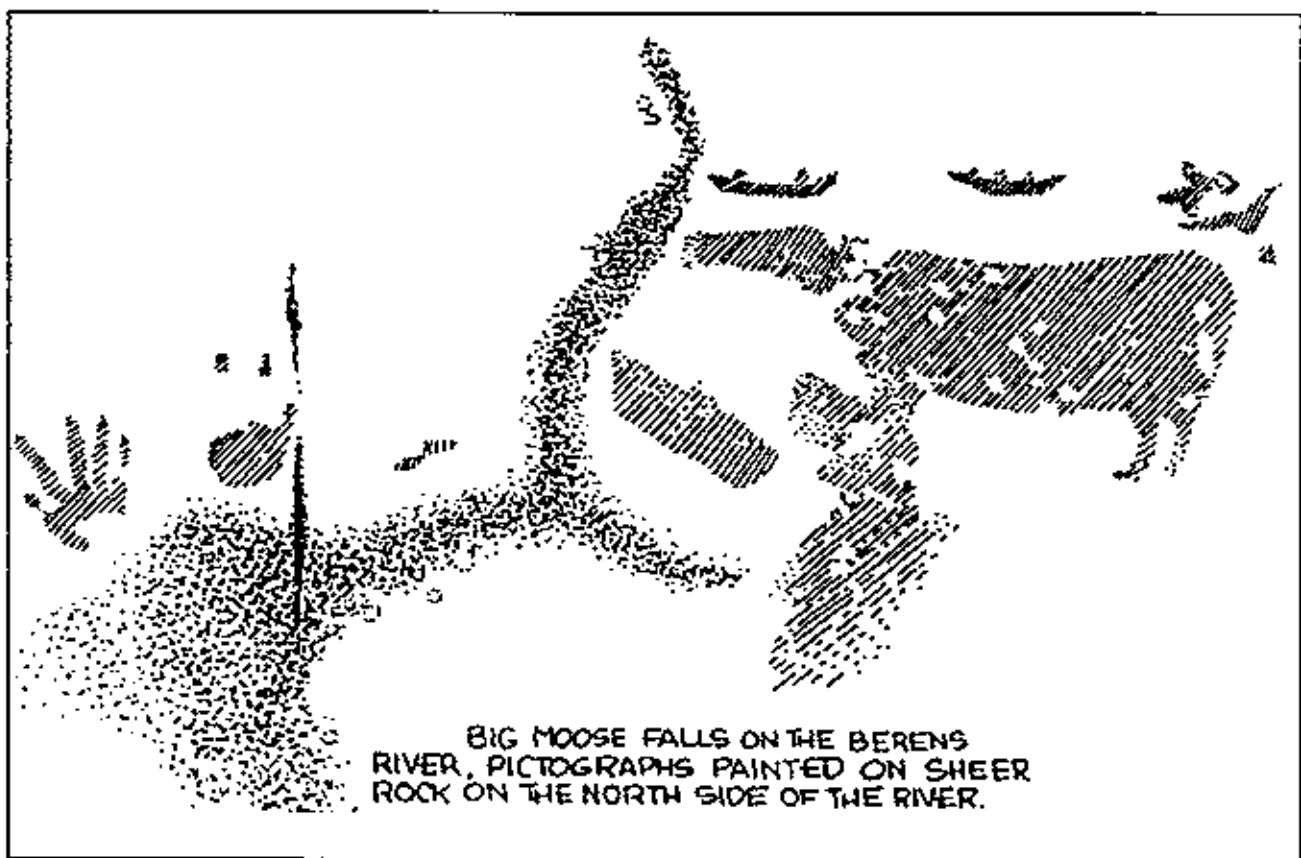
UNIT 5: BERENS RIVER IN PICTURES

Years ago the Saulteaux people did not write down their stories in books as we do today. Instead, they told them to their children. Storytelling was how parents and grandparents taught the children important lessons.

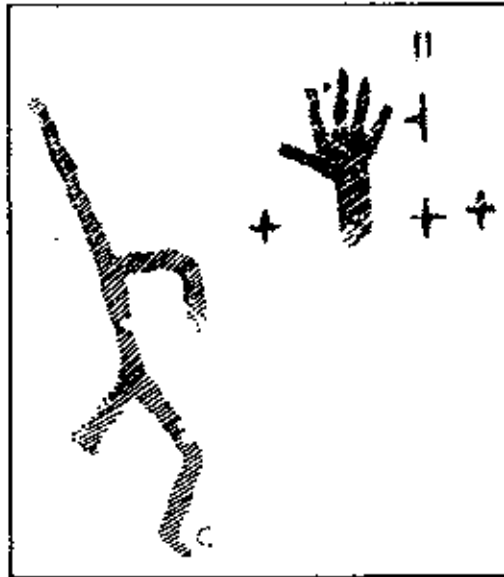
Stories were passed down from father to son, mother to daughter, grandparents to grandchildren. Storytelling was very important, and grandparents especially liked to entertain their grandchildren with them during the winter months.

Pictures can also be drawn to tell a story. Long ago, the ancestors of the Saulteaux painted pictures on cliffs along the rivers. These pictures are called pictographs.

Pictographs are pictures which tell a story. There are many pictographs drawn on the rock cliffs along the Berens and Pigeon Rivers. One is shown below. The picture tells a story. What do you think the artist was trying to tell us?



On the next page is another pictograph found close to Berens River. Can you guess the story it tells?



No one is sure what the pictographs mean because they were drawn so long ago. Perhaps they were drawn to show thankfulness for food, shelter, or some other good luck. Today we have cameras and we take pictures to make a record of things. Or we write down the things that happen.

Below and on the following pages are pictures to study. Some were taken recently while others were taken many years ago. Each tell a story of its own.

Long, Long Ago.

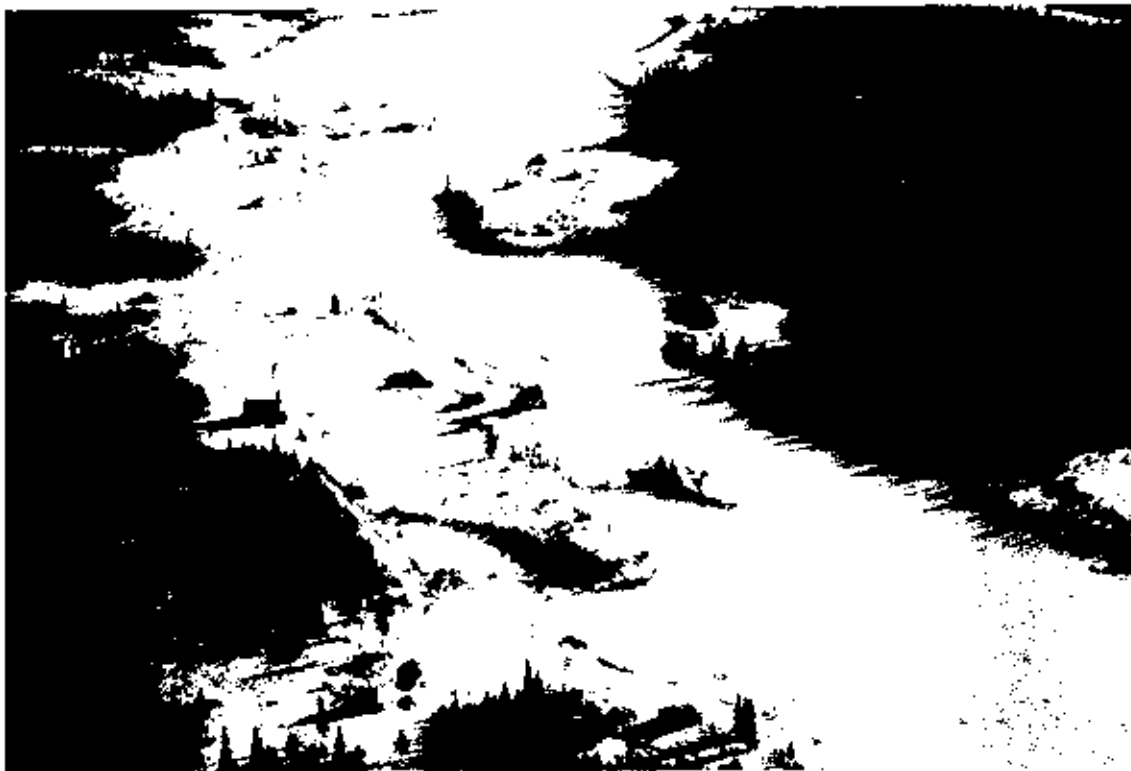


A very early picture of Berens River, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



People from Berens River long ago, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)

Are there elders in Berens River who can identify some of these people? Perhaps the women were off to church or a school concert. Or maybe they were just going to the Bay for groceries. What do you think?



Berens River from the air in the 1930s, B-27, N83-113, (courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba). There are no roads but there are trails. Were there skidoos in those days? Can you identify the church in the picture? How many homes are there? Can you see smoke from any of the chimneys?



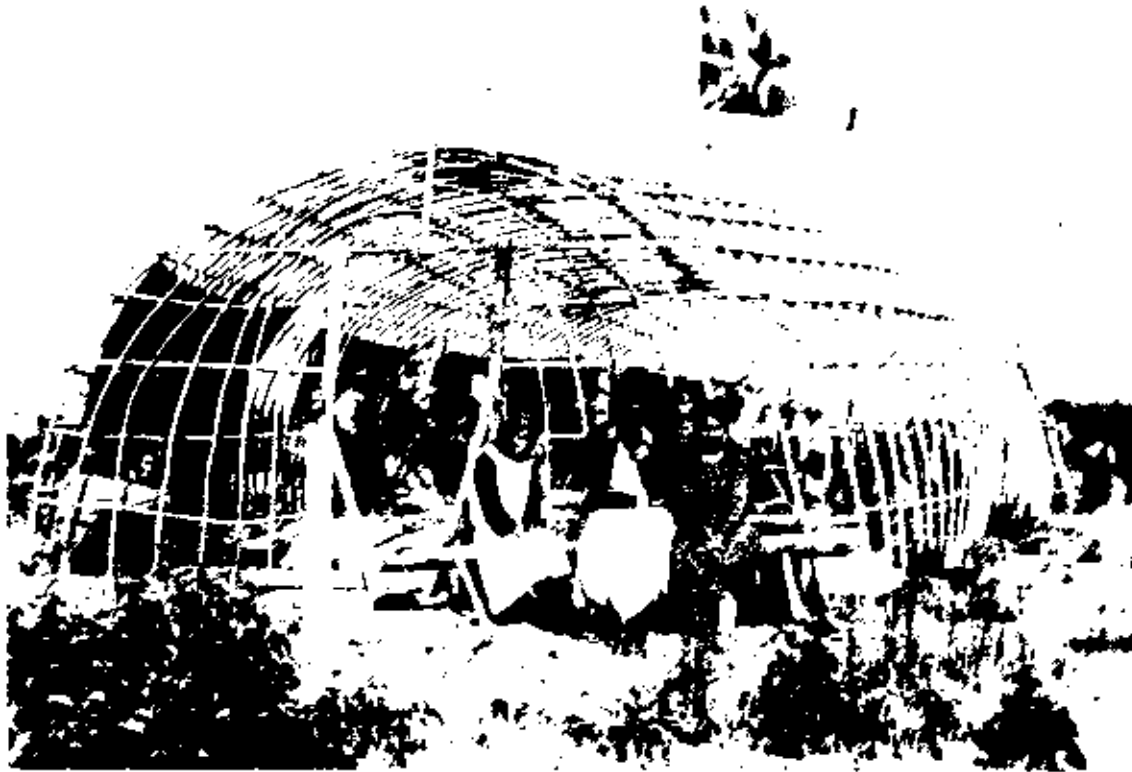
The Hudson's Bay store in 1924, Berens River 7, N7290, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba). The store was the main centre in Berens River for many years. This is where the trappers took their furs and bought their groceries. It is also where the steamships and York boats docked and unloaded supplies. And the place where people could see their friends and neighbours.



A Family Group, 1910, A.V. Thomas Collection 8, (courtesy of Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba). The Hudson's Bay Company storehouse, dock, and store can be seen in the background. Why do you suppose the fence goes right down into the water? Is the group waiting to meet a steamer, or are the people waiting to go back to the trapline? What do you think?

Treaty

The picture below shows a formal dance hall raised at Treaty time, 1933. Compare this picture with the square dance picture, page 63, taken during the 1932 Treaty.



Dance Hall, Berens River, A. Irving Hallowell Photograph, Indians Coll. 82, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)



Treaty days in the 1920s, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



Treaty Time, 1925, Berens River Coll. 3, N3581, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba). The houses in the picture are the homes of some of the people at Berens River. The people in the picture seem to be dressed up but the Treaty grounds must be some distance away. How will the people in the picture get to the Treaty grounds?

Work



Sturgeon caught at Sturgeon Falls, 1910, A.V. Thomas Coll. 10, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Working on the boats and freighting were big jobs long ago.



courtesy Oblate Brothers



courtesy Oblate Brothers

A load of firewood for the mission. The wood cutters are from left to right: John George's son William, John George, Harry Bittern, and Brother Cartier. There are five sisters by the bombardier.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

The mission farm was important. All the eggs, butter, cheese, meat, and vegetables used at the mission came from this farm. At one time, everybody in Berens River had a garden.



Commercial fishermen on Lake Winnipeg (1922) cutting their 3,000 lb. catch of fish on the tug "Luana", Joannidi, S.N.C. Coll. No. 493, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba).

Travel

Long ago, the only way to travel in summer was by birch bark canoe, then by York boat, and Peterborough canoe, later by schooner and steamboat.



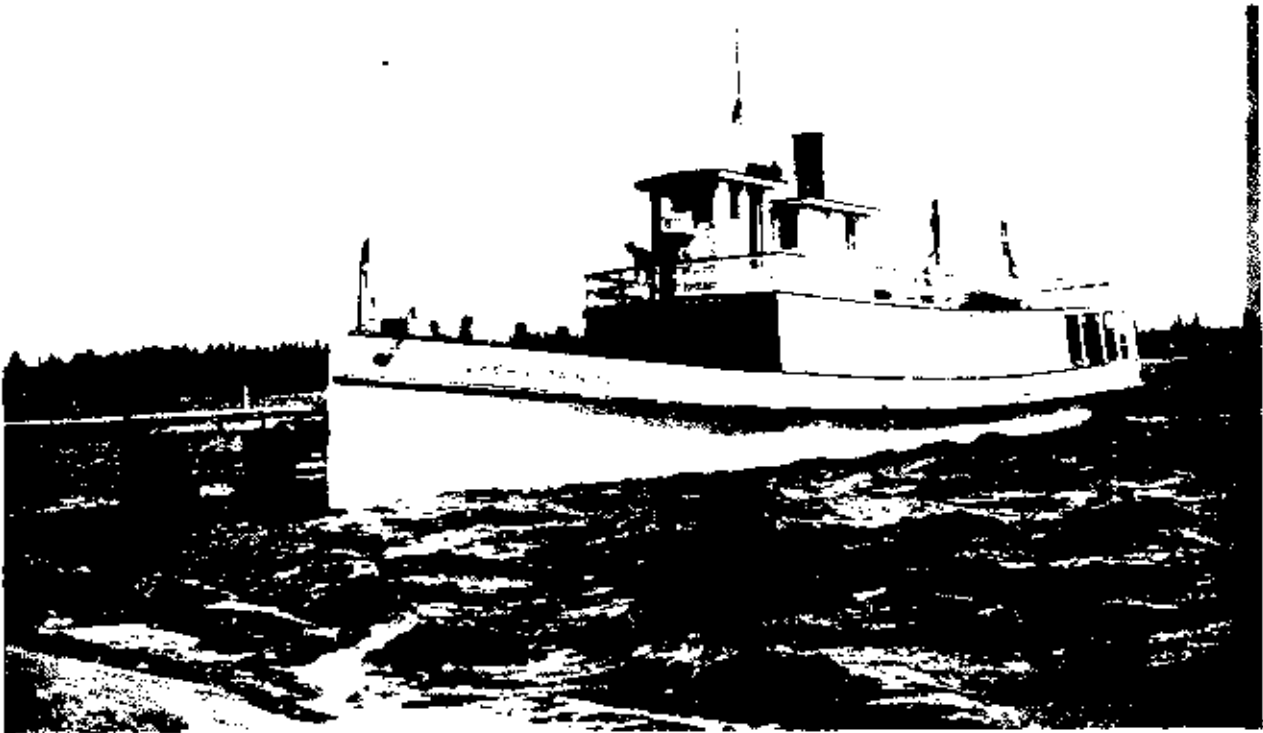
Portaging on Wet River, Berens River System, 1910, A.V. Thomas Coll. 23, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba).

Travel by canoe on the Berens River was hard work as this picture shows. Why do these men have to portage?



Rafting timber on the Berens River for the Lookout Tower, 1932, G.W. Malaher Coll. 20, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

There were steamers of different sizes.



The "Chieftain" at Berens River 1910, A.V. Thomas Collection 7, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)

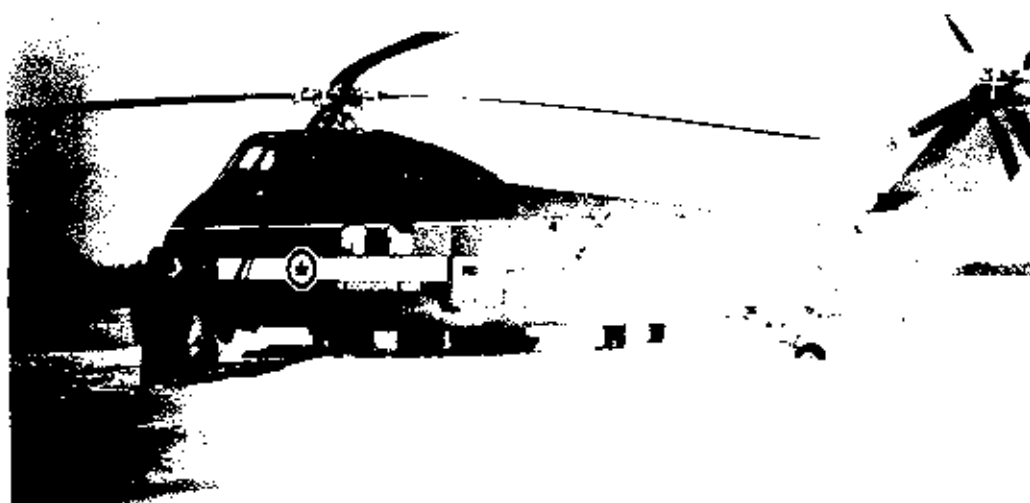


The Wolverine at Berens River, 1924, N7291, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)

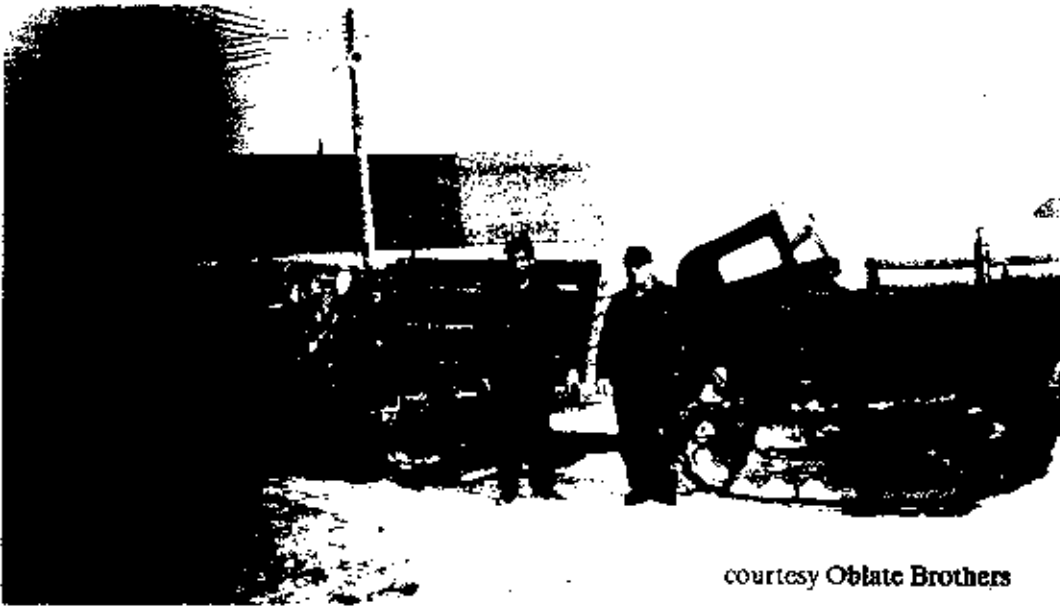
There were airplanes of different types.



A Fairchild Plane at Berens River, 1938, C.A.L. Coll. 1318,
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)



A Helicopter, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



courtesy Oblate Brothers

A tractor for winter road work and hauling firewood and a bombardier to bus students to school.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

People

Family and friends were most important in the lives of the people of Berens River.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Above: Alex Flett and Lorraine Semple at the hospital a few years ago.

Right: Sarah Bear, her adopted daughter (now Irma Goosehead), and her daughter's son, Riley Bear. The child looks very rested in his tikinagan.



courtesy Oblate Brothers



Above, men from the Berens River Area working in the bush, (courtesy Oblate Brothers)



courtesy Oblate Brothers

People from up Berens River on the spring trapline, 1920s.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

To the right: The senior class at school. In the back row we have: Angus Comber, John James Bittern, and George Patrick. On the right hand side, one below the other, are Murray and Evalt Hanson and in the middle of the second row from the front stands Tache McKay. Some of these students were good hockey players and excellent baseball players.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Below: Waiting at the Bay, 1922. Mrs. Bouchie is at extreme right of picture.



Indian Women and Children at Berens River, Joannidi, S.N.C. Coll. 582, N11563,
(courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Boniface Bittern, a young boy, and his dog. Both are upset.



Good Times

courtesy Oblate Brothers

The people of Berens River have always been able to have fun, tell stories, and laugh. Here are some pictures of people from Berens River having a good time.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

A couple of soccer teams ready to play.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

And a boat load of picnickers ready to sail. Where are the life jackets?



courtesy Oblate Brothers



courtesy Oblate Brothers

Kids ready to go for a boat trip? A pony ready for rides?



Kemp Family Coll. 13, (courtesy Manitoba Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Ma Kemp enjoying quiet time at the Inn. And some students below doing the same thing along the shoreline.



courtesy Oblate Brothers

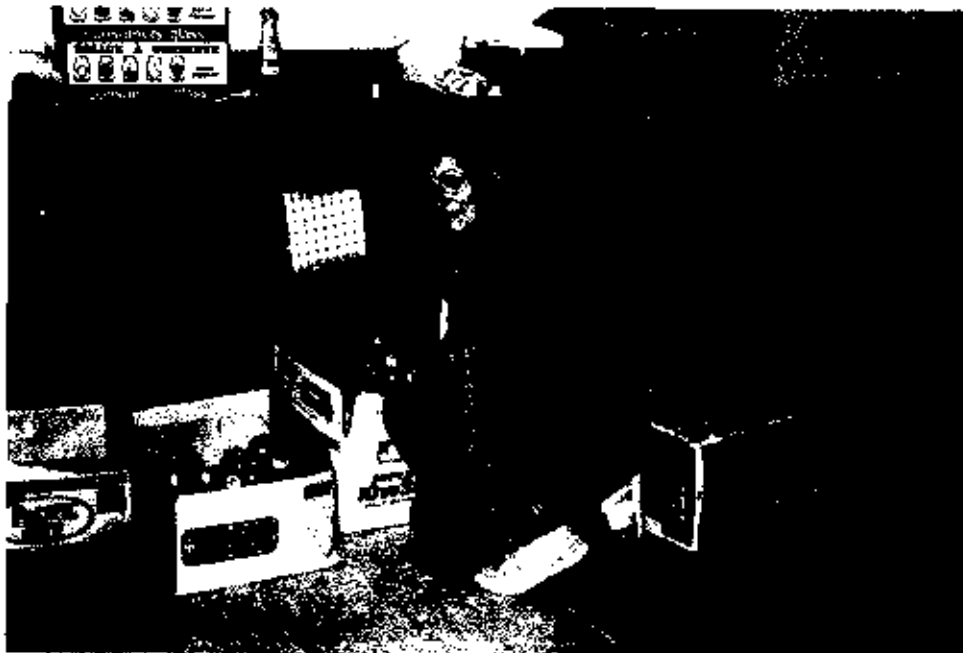
Today

Inside one of the IKWEWAK greenhouses after harvesting.



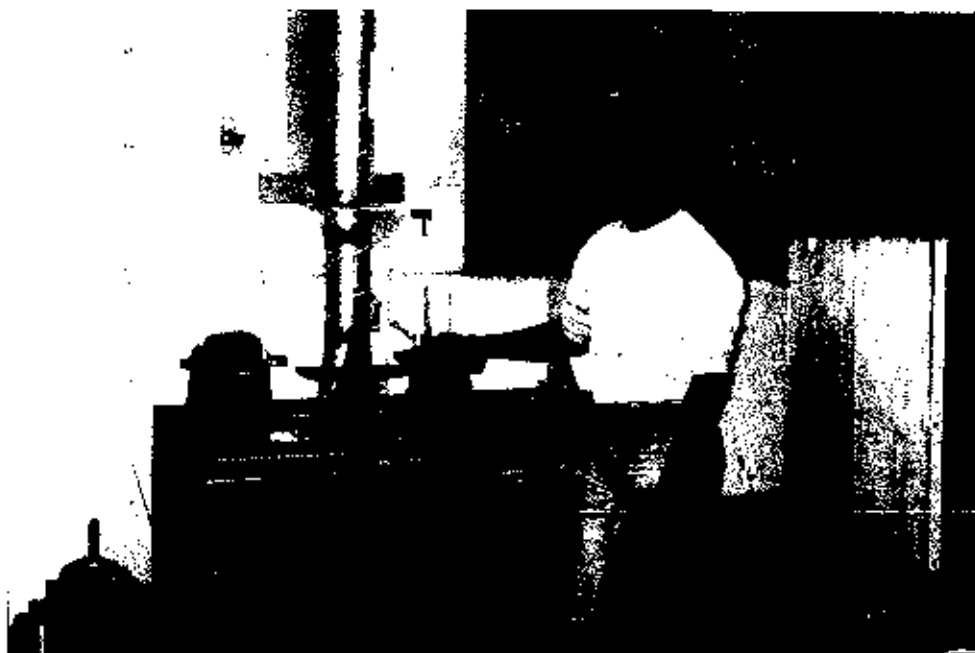
The outside crop before harvesting.

Maggie Felix with a 'few' home grown tomatoes, as good as any grown in Manitoba.

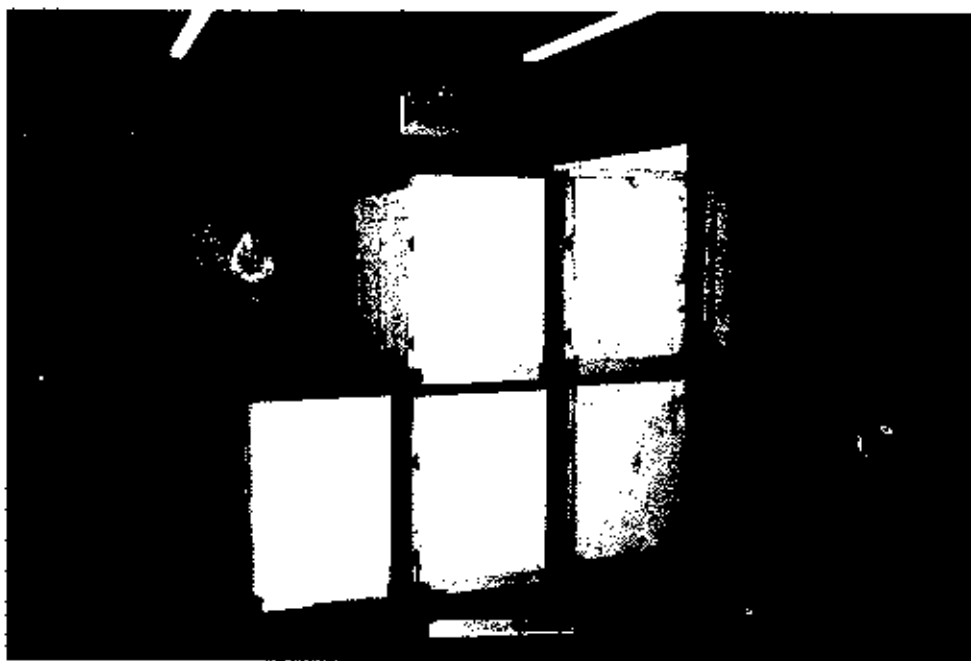


Doyle Swain inside the furniture plant.

Doyle beside a wood lathe.



Kitchen cabinets made for local housing.



SHEKONCIKE, the rock 'chewer'.



John Ross, the loader operator
talking to Alex Patrick, the
general manager of the
SHEKONCIKE operation.



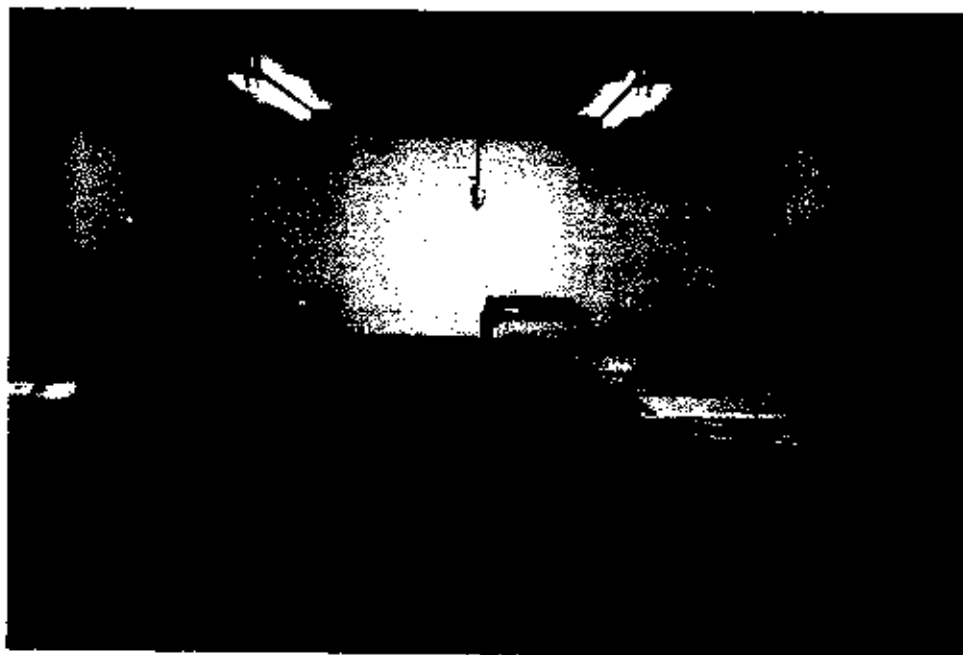


The Fishery and the 'KI-NO-SHAY' Co-op is the major employer in Berens River today. The fishermen must have good equipment, big boats, and back-up motors.

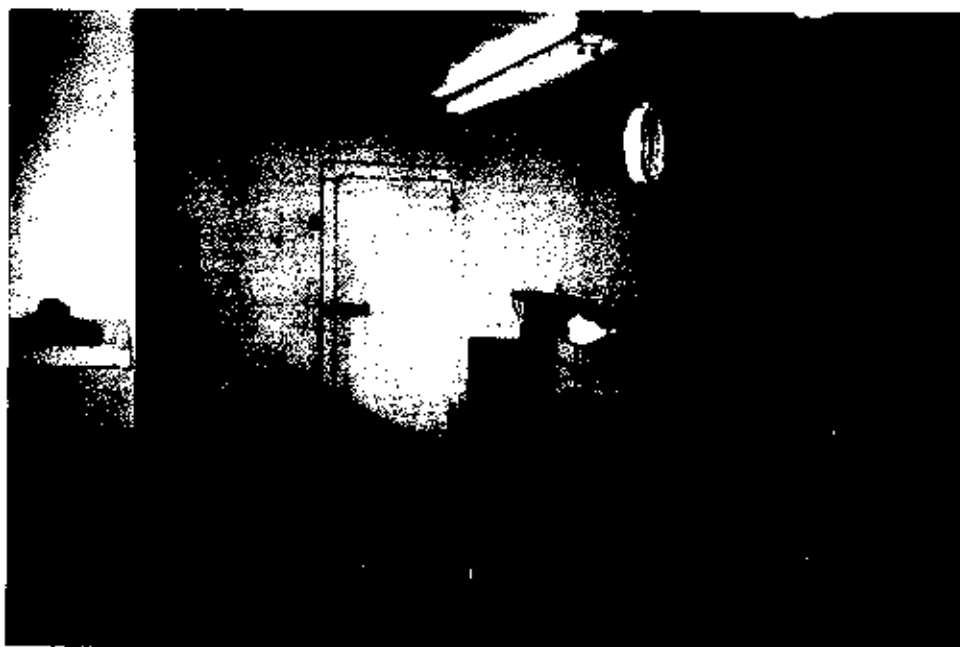
The unloading ramp at the plant. The tubs of fish go up this ramp and into the fish cleaning and weighing area.



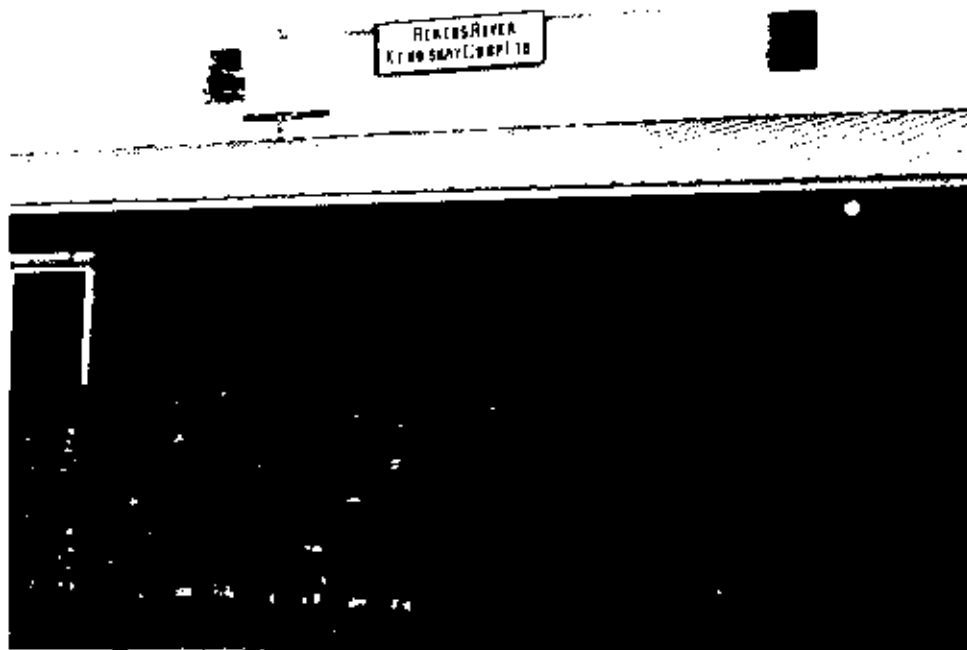
The cleaning tables (note ramp where tubs come in full of fish.)



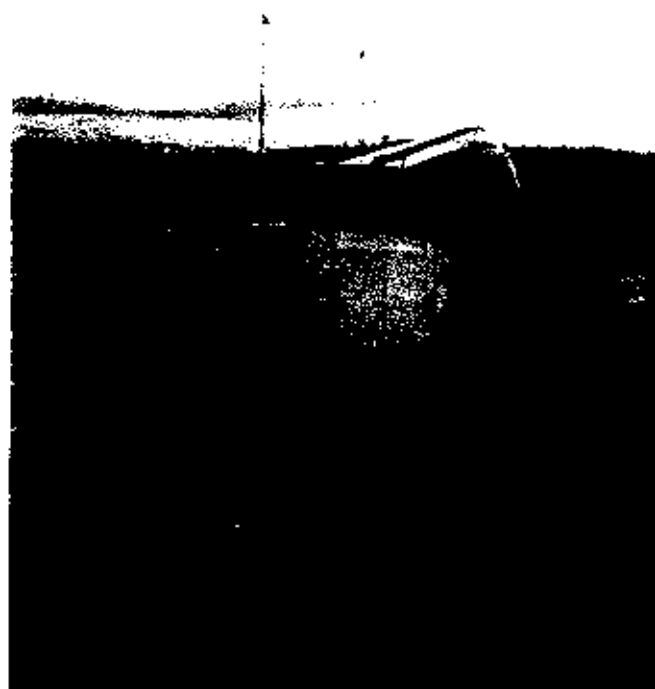
After cleaning, the fish are weighted and put in the freezer so they will not spoil.



Tubs ready for anxious fishermen.



The Co-op Tender ready for any emergency.



MEESUN - A firewood operation.



Modern Travel and Communication



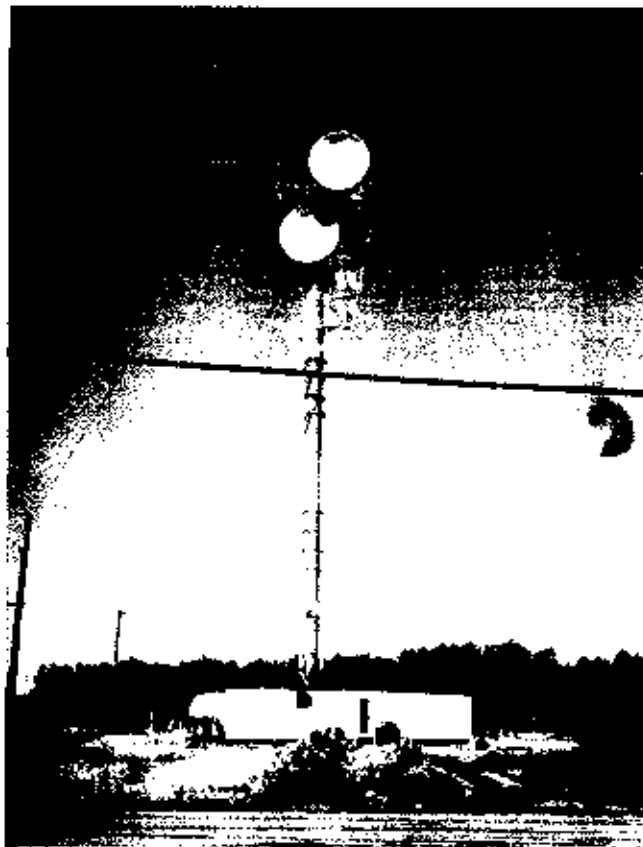
By air and winter road.



Manitoba Hydro.



Communication tower below.



The Nursing Station.



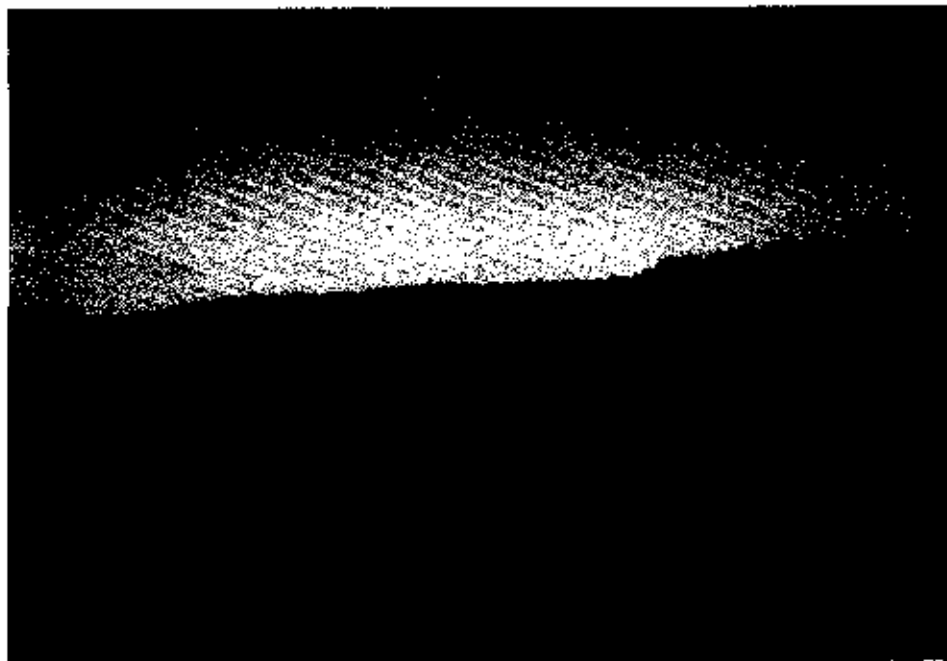
Forestry



Channel Area Logging



Forest reserves.



Cutting five, six, ten logs at a time. Elvis Flett of Berens River is the operator.



Skidding...



Squaring up piles.



The slasher pulls the logs from the piles and cuts them into neat eight foot lengths, then it drops the eight foot lengths into piles like those shown on the top of page 146.

Geri Leggett and his slasher.



Meanwhile, back at the main camp...



Ken Vipond, Geri Leggett, and Harold Lasn discuss a problem.





Preserving the forests has been important to the Channel Area Logging Operation.

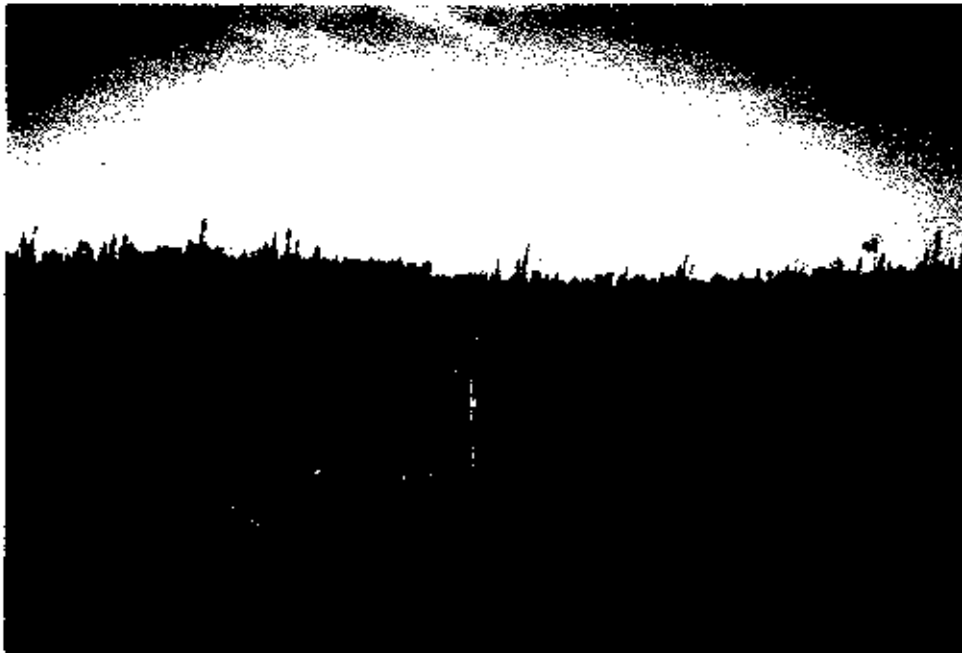
By 1988 the Corporation was planting half a million seedlings each year.

Here Mr. Vipond shows a seedling planted in 1987.

Along with some seedlings planted in the spring of 1988.



Acres and acres of seedlings on an experimental plot.



A portable saw mill.



BERENS RIVER

The present,



the past,



and a very bright future.