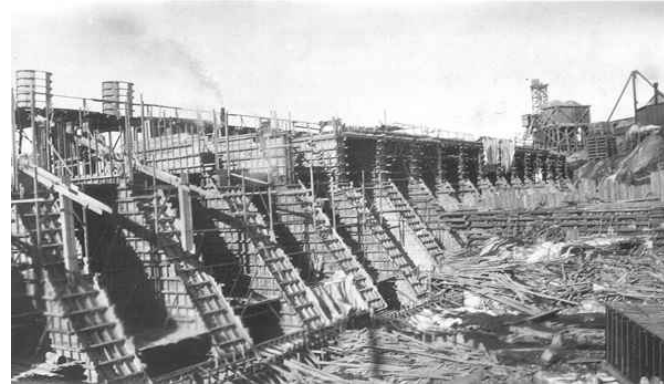


POWER FROM THE ENGLISH RIVER

The flow of the English River has been constant since the retreat of the last ice age, 8000 years ago. Constant too has been the movement of people along the river, from the Cree, Sioux and Ojibway and later the French Courier du Bois and the English Hudson's Bay Company Men for which the river was named.

The English River at Ear Falls drains an area in excess of 27,000 square kilometers and discharges an amazing 6,500 cubic feet of water per second as it thunders through the Ear Falls Dam. These waters flow west meeting the Chukuni River at the "Mattawa", the meeting waters. As the English River flows south and west it gathers the waters of the Cedar, Wabigoon, Long Legged and countless other rivers and streams until it empties into the Winnipeg River north of Lake of the Woods.

Between 1915 and 1917 the Water Power Branch of the Department of the Interior began a survey of the English River. The purpose of the survey was to investigate potential sites for power generation along the waterway. In 1929 construction was started on the Ear Falls conservation dam which would regulate the discharge of waters from Lac Seul into the English River. A powerhouse was added the same year and soon power was being generated for the mining operations to the north at Red Lake. Additional generating units were installed in 1937, 1940 and 1948, providing a steady flow of electricity to the northwestern power grid.



During dam construction 1929



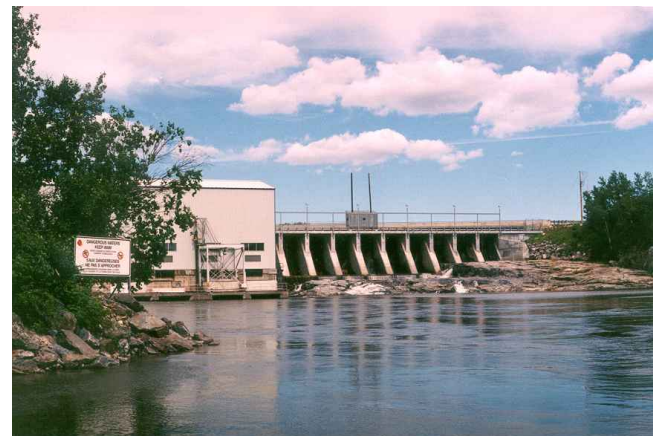
Lower Ear Falls before dam construction 1928.



Ear Falls in the 1940s, Hydro Colony in foreground. A boat is being transported over the marine railway to the lower English River.

Development of a second dam at Manitou Falls, 20km downstream of Ear Falls was started in 1953. A road was constructed from Highway 105 south of Ear Falls to the site (now Highway 804). This road included a bailey bridge over the English River which was thought to be the longest permanent bailey bridge in Canada. The Manitou Dam was completed in 1956 with the first power being generated in March of the same year. By March of 1958 all five generating units came on line producing power to fuel the areas economy.

Today both the Ear Falls and Manitou Dams are operated remotely from Thunder Bay. Current expansion of the Ear Falls facility and the potential of future development along the waterway will continue to generate clean power from the waters of the mighty English River.



Downstream from the Ear Falls Dam and Generating Station.

Ear Falls is situated on the English River at the northwest corner of Lac Seul, Ontario's second largest lake. The areas abundance of fish and game and its location on a major waterway has made Ear Falls a natural travel and trading center since mankind first inhabited the region some 7500 years ago.



Goldpines at its peak in 1929, the Hudson's Bay Company Store is on the right. This photo was taken before the rise in water levels on Lac Seul.

The earliest record of Europeans in the area, the ruins of "a very old fort" and a "old French House" were recorded in 1792, just west of Ear Falls on the English River. The first European settlement in the area was the Hudson's Bay Company Post at "Pine Ridge", later named Goldpines. By 1925 the gold rush in the Red Lake and Woman Lake areas resulted in a large increase in freight being hauled through the area, climaxing in 1938 when more freight was being flown through Goldpines than the Chicago Airport.

Goldpines remained the main settlement in the area until 1929, when the dam was built at Ear Falls. With the dam came the workers who moved into the construction camp close to the dam. Others moved from Goldpines to the area downstream of the dam known as "Little Canada". That same year the Department of Lands and Forests moved its operations from Goldpines to Goose Island. In the years to follow the decline of mining activity at Woman Lake and the development of the mechanical portages at Ear Falls proved to be the final blow for this little community at the mouth of the English River. For Goldpines the gold rush was over. On a visit to Goldpines today you can still see some of the relics of days gone by as some of the original buildings are still being used.



The dangers of bush flying. Fire destroys a Ontario Air Service "flying boat" G-CAOF at Goldpines in 1928.



Hauling freight from York Boats at Goldpines in 1926.



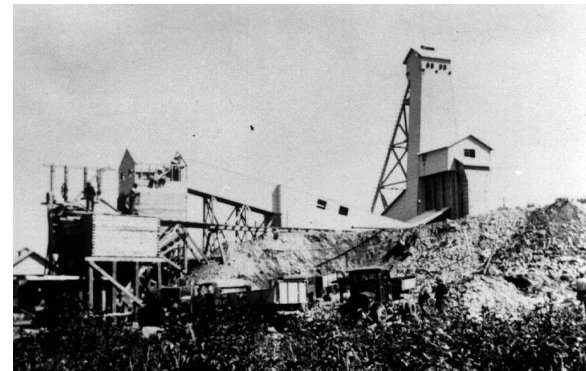
The HBC store at Goldpines, 1929.



Children at school in Goldpines, 1929

In March of 1926 gold was discovered on the shores of Woman lake. The resulting gold rush to the area diverted many prospectors from the Red Lake area which had been staked earlier in the year. A spectacular find at Narrow Lake contained visible gold in a large vein which ran down the rocky shoreline into the lake. The nearby portage to the Bathurst Property became known as the "Golden Sidewalk" as free gold could be cut out of the veins which ran at surface along the trail.

The area became a bee hive of activity in 1926 and 1927 with numerous mining companies at Clearwater Lake, Woman Lake, Jackson-Manion, Duncan, Bojo, Bathurst and other properties transporting equipment to and setting up camps while trenching and drilling their properties for mineral potential. The areas remote location made the transport of men and materials extremely difficult and costly. Air transportation from Pine Ridge was expensive and could not fly in large equipment which had to be brought in by horse or tractor. The area also did not have the luxury of having a major navigable waterway like the Chukuni River which provided relatively easy access to the Red Lake area.



Uchi Lake Mine 1938

By 1929 many of the gold properties in the Woman - Narrow Lake area were abandoned due to insufficient ore and the high price of developing the properties. The rich surface vein at Narrow lake could not be found at depth and the mine closed in 1930. While many properties in the area were closing some went on to become producing mines. In 1937 the Uchi Gold Mine was opened prompting renewed activity at Goldpines. In 1938 a road was driven to the mine from Goldpines and in 1939 a transmission line was built to the site. The mine remained in operation until 1942 producing a total of 114,467 ounces of gold. The gold mines of the Woman Lake area while not as long-lived as their Red Lake counter parts still produced in excess of 500,000 ounces of gold between 1927 and 1952. The area remained realitively quiet until 1971 when the South Bay Mine began production at Confederation Lake, producing zinc, copper and silver until closing in 1981. The Woman Lake area is still actively explored and contains numerous deposits with sizable quantities of gold, silver, copper, zinc and iron.

THE GRIFFITH MINE From Iron Mine to Wildlife Refuge

The iron ore body, on the west shore of Bruce Lake, was first explored in the early 1920s. In 1953, L. Dempster, J. Dempster and A.C. Mosher staked the site and in 1965, a 75-year lease was taken on the property by the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco Inc).

Plant construction and the development of the open pit mine began in January of 1966 with operations underway by February of 1968. When in full production, the Griffith Mine produced 1.5 million long tons of pellets annually, with an iron content of 66.4 percent.

The pellets were transported by train to Thunder Bay and then shipped on the Great Lakes to Stelco's steel making facilities in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ontario. The mine closed on March 31st, 1986 due to the high transportation costs and inability to be competitive with larger North American producers in Quebec, Labrador, Michigan and Minnesota.

Today the Griffith Mine Interpretive Site provides a great place for many outdoor activities. Rehabilitation at this site has created a home for many wildlife species and there are excellent viewing opportunities for nature enthusiasts. The trail network throughout the mine site provide opportunities for hiking, cycling, nature viewing and rock collecting.



The population of Ear Falls is presently about 1200, with most residence living within the townsite, and in the rural area along the English River. Residents enjoy modern community living surrounded by the beauty of the northern lakes and forests.

Major industries include, hydro electric power generation, forestry, lumber production and tourism. Ontario Power Generation operates the dams at Ear Falls and Manitou Falls and maintains a regional maintenance yard. The Ear Falls Sawmill, owned and operated by Weyerhaeuser Canada produces dimensional lumber for markets in Canada, the U.S. and abroad. Over forty tourist resorts offer visitors a wide range of services and facilities, great fishing, hunting and wilderness experiences.

The community is well planned and set for future development with plenty of residential and commercial building lots available, as well as large tracts of Crown Land. Modern water and sewer plants are capable of meeting a demand three times the present usage. The community also boasts beautiful municipal parks, a museum, library, nine hole golf course, and sports complex.

A modern community set within the beauty of Northwestern Ontario's Sunset Country makes Ear Falls a great place to live work and play



Ear Falls Sawmill
Weyerhaeuser Canada

In 1996 the Township was successful in attracting a sawmill, and in 1997 Avenor began production at its 60 million dollar facility which is presently owned and operated by Weyerhaeuser Canada. The high-tech mill produces dimentional lumber products for markets in Canada, the U.S. and abroad.



Ear Falls Dam



Ear Falls Township Office



Ear Falls Golf Course

Music in the Woods at the Trout Forest Music Festival



The Trout Forest Music Festival, held every August on the shores of the English River, brings together musical talent from across the country, and is the highlight of the summer season.



Pakwash Provincial Park, 20km north of Ear Falls is co-managed by Ear Falls 2000 (a local community group), and the Provincial Government. The Park features 1.5km of beautiful sandy beach, tent and trailer sites, a group camping site, nature trail and observation tower, public showers and washrooms, trailer dump station, a boat launch and a beautiful view of Pakwash Lake.

