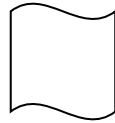


*The Mills of the Tay Watershed  
and Immediate Area of Eastern Ontario*



*The Adams Mill at Glen Tay, Ontario (Ca 1820)\**

**Compiled by David Taylor  
Glen Tay, Ontario**

**\*Photo Courtesy of Ralph Buttrum**

## **"The Mills of the Tay Watershed & Local Area of Eastern Ontario"**

Beginning in the early 1800s and into the 1900s, the Tay River and its tributaries provided water power to dozens of mills throughout the 95 kilometre long watershed – from the river's headwaters above Bobs Lake to its mouth in Port Elmsley, on the Lower Rideau Lake.

The Tay mills sawed lumber, cut shingles, de-barked logs, ground grain and minerals, carded wool, spun textiles, and even provided water for the local scotch whiskey. As electricity supplanted water power in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, several even produced power for the Town of Perth. The mills have long since stopped production and most have disappeared – but the ruins and foundations of many may still be found along the river.

The following provides an introduction to these mills and their location on the upper Tay watershed, and in Perth, and Port Elmsley – and a list of some of the mills operating in neighbouring areas outside of the Tay watershed. Most of the mills featured here depended on the waterway for power or water – but a few have been included simply because they were located near the river. For those wishing more information, sources are provided at the end of this paper.

In the '*Photo Gallery*' section of the *Perth Historical Society* website, you will find photos of the mills as they are now, thanks to a project of the Lanark County Camera Club in 2005. The Club, in cooperation with the Friends of the Tay Watershed Association, produced a photographic record of those mills still standing. The objective was to document the remains of this wonderful heritage and the foundation that the mills provided to the economy in the early days of this region.

### **Mills of the Upper Tay River Watershed**

For the mills of the **upper Tay River**, the source of much of the following information is the book "*The Dammed Lakes*", by Lloyd Jones (see the end of this paper for the reference)

**Korry (Corry/Currie) Mills** (buildings are now gone) located on the Tay River, at Bolingbroke, Tay Valley Township, South Sherbrooke Ward, Con. 3, Lot 7. In his book, Lloyd Jones reports that Dr. Thom of Perth was probably the first to dam the Tay River at Bobs Lake and operate a sawmill between 1821 and 1841. The location of the mills at Bolingbroke was known as 'Thom's Rapids', approximately 200 metres below the present dam. In 1848, Thom sold his land and mill or mills at that location, along with a dam, to John Korry. Korry apparently built his own dam, and operated four mills there, on both sides of the river, including a grist/flour, shingle, planing and sawmill. He also operated several logging camps in the area, and shipped the products by wagon to Westport. The 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas shows a sawmill on both sides of the river at Bolingbroke. When the Federal Government purchased the dam site in 1870 (see below), their map shows a dam at the Korry mill site at Bolingbroke and also an 'old Korry Dam' about 200 yards upstream, at the site of the present Parks Canada Dam.

**Deacon Mills** (buildings are gone), located on the Tay River, about 1 ½ miles below the Bollingbroke Dam, in Tay Valley Township, South Sherbrooke Ward (Con. 3, Lot 10). Richard Deacon operated two shingle mills and a sawmill – and the products shipped down the Tay to Perth. In 1865, and in the 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas, Ephram Deacon had a sawmill here.

Note: There were several more sawmills and grist mills further up the watershed, particularly on Crow Lake, Fish Creek and Eagle Creek, between the 1840s and 1871, including a sawmill owned by John Morris, the well-known Perth surveyor, in 1858. In the early 1900s, portable mills were also located at various sites in the area (Lloyd Jones' book). F. Braun in his letter (see reference at the end) reported a non-operating sawmill 'at the head of (Bobs) lake', by a Mr. Andrews.

**The Bolingbroke Dams:** The first dam on the Tay River at Bobs Lake was built by Alexander Thom in 1821 to provide water power to mills at what became Bollingbroke hamlet. However, somewhat ironically, it is the dam that continues to have impact long after the mills are gone. From 1865, the Federal Government took an interest in it as a source of water for the Rideau Canal system. That year, F. Braun of the Department of Public Works, Quebec, toured the upper Tay watershed and reported on its potential for establishing a dam at Bobs Lake. The government's interest was added to by a drought in the mid-1860s, which, by 1868, threatened transport on the Rideau Canal and led to complaints by other mill owners along the Tay River that Korry was holding back water at his dam. In 1870, the government bought the mill site from Korry (who continued to operate his mills) and in 1871 raised the height of the dam, which led to flooding of properties on Bobs Lake (and several cash settlements). Behind the dam, Bobs & Crow Lakes became a major source of water for the Rideau, and the Tay became a managed river, by Parks Canada, which continues to this day.



**Aerial Photo of Bolingbroke Dam Area**  
(D. Taylor)



**Bolingbroke Dam**  
(D. Taylor)

## **Mills of the Middle Tay Watershed**

**Ritchie's Mill (later known as 'Adams Sawmill')**, located on the Tay River, on the Noonan Road, in Tay Valley Township, Bathurst Ward, Con. 1, Lot 12: produced lumber until the early 1900s. It is in serious deterioration, although part of the original dam and mill pond remain. The mill has had several owners, including John Ritchie (J. & R. Ritchie), Carl Adams, and in the late 1900s, after it ceased operation, an Ottawa family. The mill and Property are presently owned by Mark Noonan of Tay Valley Township.



**McCabe Grist Mill** (building is intact), located on the south-west side of the Tay River, Con. 1, Lot 13, a few hundred meters below the Ritchie Mill (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas). The 1865 F. Braun letter (see 'Sources' at the end), listed the mill as being '¾ mile below Ritchie's mill' – it is, perhaps, somewhat closer than that. The October 1865 Slater letter calls it a 'grist & oat mill'. The mill is now incorporated into the residence of owners Mr. & Mrs. M. Blythe.



**McCabe Grist Mill  
Shore Foundation & Island Sluice**



**Front of McCabe Mill**



**Foundation remaining from Wilson Sawmill**

**Wilson Sawmill** (buildings are gone), located on the Tay River, one quarter mile downstream from McCabe's Mill, according to the 1865 F. Braun letter. The sawmill shows in the 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas, on the south side of the river, at a narrowing of the river, just above the Bowes Mill site, in Bathurst Ward, Con. 1, Lot 16 - listed as 'T. Wilson Sawmill', on the original property of G. Wilson. The property is now owned by Wilson Bowes, on Bowes Sideroad.

**Bowes Mill (aka Fraser Mill, or Tay View Mill)**, located on the Tay River, at the Bowes Road, Tay Valley Township, Bathurst Ward, Con. 1, Lot 17: began in the early 1820s by Archibald Fraser, as a sawmill and grist mill. The property has had several owners, including Abel Mott (1833), Henry Glass (1835), Joshua Adams (1839), three Elliott brothers until 1856, John Allen until 1868, James Laurie (1883), and John and Samuel Wilson in 1878. Louis Badour operated the Mill from 1891 and sold it in 1895. Between 1896 and 1922, the mill became a power plant, producing half of Perth's electric power, but returned to a grist mill from 1930s to 1952. It is now a museum, maintained by the Bowes family. See *Appendix A*, for additional information on this mill.



(Photo – Ralph Butrum)

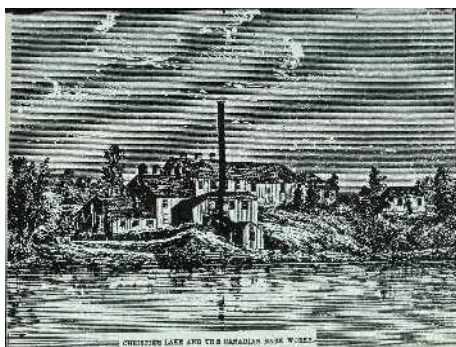
**Allan's (Allen's) Mill – a sawmill and grist mill**, located on Grants Creek, on Allan's Mill Road, Tay Valley Township, North Burgess Ward, Con 10. Lot 12: owned by 'John Allen' in 1865; in 1878, operated by William Allan; in 1890, apparently owned by John Allan, under the name of J & R Ritchie. The mill was restored by John Mathews, and in 2010 had a new owner.

**J. & T. Scott Sawmill** - on Scotts Snye, in Burgess Con. 10, Lot 17, on the north side of the snye, at the head of a mill pond, on the land of J. & T. Scott. In 1890, this was a small, circular mill of 4m capacity, cutting pine, hemlock, and hardwoods, owned by James Scott.



**George Oliver's Grist Mill** – was located several hundred yards downstream from the Allan Mill, south of the Scotch Line, at Tay Valley Township, North Burgess Ward, Con. 10, Lot 11, on the property of George Oliver. This mill was operating at the time of the 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas and also in 1889, when it was being run by Robert Oliver.

Downstream side of Oliver Mill dam.



**The Canadian Bark Works** (buildings now gone), was located on the north side of Christie Lake, on Gravely Bay, in present Tay Valley Township, Bathurst Ward, Con. 3, Lot 2, on property originally owned by Oliver Burns. The mill, also known as 'The Old Bark Factory', was built in 1868 by a group of business men of Perth, including Thomas Aspden, Alexander Morris, William J. Morris, Captain John Manion, John S. Hart - and a Boston company. The mill extracted tannin from hemlock bark (used for tanning hides). The product was shipped abroad,

(Lithograph courtesy of Gray Palmer) but also used at the Templeton tannery in Perth. The Bark Works closed in 1874, the supply of hemlock having been exhausted. (Source: Perth Courier article, November 21, 1988 'Portraits of Our Heritage', by Michael Taylor). See *Appendix B*, for additional information on this mill.

**Adam's Mill (Glen Tay Mill)**, located on the Tay River, in the Hamlet of Glen Tay (earlier, 'Adamsville'), Tay Valley Township, Bathurst Ward, Con. 2, Lot 20: began as a sawmill and grist mill built by Abraham Parsall, a Loyalist, possibly around 1816. In 1820, Colonel Joshua Adams of Perth acquired the site on Parsall's death, hence the hamlet's early name of Adamsville. Over time, the hamlet came to include five mills (grist mill, oat mill, sawmill, tannery store, wagon shop and woolen mill; source: 'Glen Tay, Then and Now'; see below). In 1863, the mill was purchased by Henry Moorehouse – and again in 1872. Between this, in 1865, it was owned by John Hargrave (sawmill, grist mill and carding mill). In the late 1800s, the sawmill and planing mills were owned by 'Messrs. Hargrave & Dodd', and the product was 'rafted' to Perth. It became a hydroelectric plant in the late 1800s, and in 1897 was acquired by Perth Electric and Water Power Co., apparently producing power until 1918. In 1926, the dam gave way, taking out Glen Tay Bridge and flooding parts of Perth. The mill has been beautifully restored, by the Drennan family. See *Appendix C* for additional information on this mill.

**Other mills in Glen Tay and elsewhere in Bathurst Township:**

**Carriage Factor** (building still in place), south of Glen Tay, on Grants Creek at Glen Tay Road, owned by James Kearns.

**D. & D. McNicol** sawmill, located at Wemyss, in Bathurst Ward.

**Boulton's Mills**, a grist mill, sawmill, and shingle machine, on Boulton's Creek, in Bathurst Ward (possibly located in Con 11, Lot 22 or 23, according to an 1863 adv.).

**Mills in the Town of Perth:**

**Code's Mill**, located on the main branch of the Tay River, at the corner of Herriot and Wilson Streets; although this mill did not use water power, its prominence in the town requires mention. Beginning as a tannery in the 1840s, the property was acquired by T. A. Code in 1882, and established as 'Tay Knitting Mills'. The factory went on to produce socks and felt until the mid-1900s.



(photo from Isabel Hardie collection, ca 1900) |

**Frontenac Paper Box Co. (Lillie Bolt Factory)**, located on the small branch of the Tay River, on Lewis Street, at present-day Code Park. This mill did not use water power but is included here because of its prominence on the Little Tay. This property was on the original land grant to Captain Alexander Thom, Perth's first physician (and first owner of the Bolingbroke dam property mentioned above). It was owned by several people before being bought in 1883 by Robert Lillie, who constructed the stone building to expand his iron foundry (moved from Port Elmsley around 1878). Since he manufactured mainly nuts and bolts, it became known as the 'bolt factory'. In 1893, it was used for mica cutting; in 1895, John Koch and Crystal Springs Brewery leased it. In the early 1900s, it returned to mica cutting, then had several lives as a garage, a polish manufacturing plant, snow fence manufacturing, and in 1940 a bottling plant (**Perth Bottling Works**) and in 1953 Robinsons Beverage Company. In 1966, **Frontenac Paper Box Co.** bought the building to make packaging products. In 1980, **Grant Edmonds Enterprises Ltd.** provided printing from there. After 1981, the building was converted to town house units. (a photo ca 1900 is in the Isabel Hardie file of the **Photo Gallery** on this website.)

**Spalding & Stewart Distillery**, located on the Little Tay, at 106 Gore Street (presently the office of ‘Telus’ company): was built as a brewery in 1830 by William Locke (Lock), then McEwen & Morris Brewery, then Moore & Spalding Brewery, and evolved into a distillery in the late 1870s, until Prohibition in 1916/1917. The building has had several incarnations since, including a brush plant, auto showroom, potato chip plant, and, finally, retail outlets. The original vaults are still located in the basement. It is said that a tunnel ran from this building to William Locke’s pub on Drummond Street, by the river.

**McLaren Distillery**, (building now gone), located on the main branch of the Tay River, in the present Stewart Park; first built in 1818, by Captain Henry Graham, a Perth magistrate, who sold it to J. A. McLaren. It operated from 1841 to 1916.

**Haggart Mill** (only dam remains), located on Haggart Island, on Mill Street: a dam was built in 1817 by Dr. Alexander Thom, including a frame building for a mill. John Haggart acquired the property and unfinished mill in 1832/1833, and expanded it from 1834, to eventually include first a flour mill and then a sawmill and oatmeal mill – as well as a carding mill on the adjacent Little Tay, below the present dam. It was known as Perth Mills, and, over the years, the company name evolved as partners and operators came and went – R. H. Balderson, Haggart & Herron, James Herron & Sons, Perth Roller Mills, W.T. Patterson, and Dodds & Erwin. In the late 1800s, the dam was producing electricity for Perth. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1964. (photo ca 1900 by Isabel Hardie; for more photos of the mill see [www.perthhs.org](http://www.perthhs.org))



### **Perth sawmills in existence in 1890:**

**William Allan jr.** – circular sawmill & later shingle mill, at 127 Peter Street (is possibly the subject of this Isabel Hardie photo, taken across the river, from the Links O’Tay Golf Course ca 1900).

See **Appendix F** for details.



**Peter Amey** – a circular sawmill with 4m capacity, cutting pine, hemlock and hardwoods. (location not known)

**D & A Kippen**, on Kippen Street at Wilson – a planing mill and sash & door factory, which became Perth Planing Mill, then Beaver Lumber Co., and Home Hardware & Lumber. In May 2011, the Fields Department store occupies the site.

**Peter McLaren** – perhaps was only a wholesale & retail yard

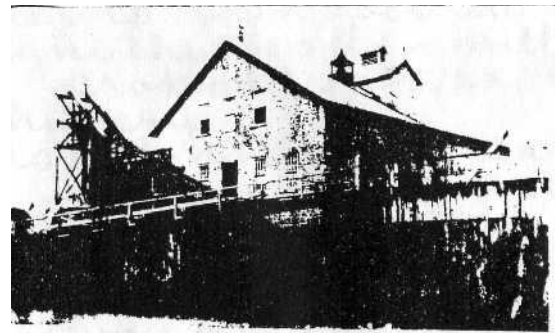
### **Mills in Port Elmsley (Original Tay Canal)**

The industrialization of Port Elmsley began with the construction of a dam in the mid-1820s, by the Weatherhead family who owned property along the Tay River around ‘Fishing Falls’ (later called Pike Falls – a 1½ mile series of rapids extending above the present bridge at Port Elmsley), on Con. 7, Lot 14. Aside from causing a stir with the Perthites aiming to develop a canal on that stretch of river, it was the first step in what would become a village of several mills. The 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas lists a woolen mill, grist mill and two sawmills at Port Elmsley, and, later, a graphite mill.

**Weatherhead Sawmill and Shingle Mill (later known as Frost & Wood)** (buildings are gone, but parts of the dam embankment are still in place) Con. 7, Lot 14, upstream from Port Elmsley, at the site of Lock Three of the original Tay Canal. This is the location of the Weatherhead dam that caused considerable discussion in the early planning of the Tay Canal. In an 1863 ad, Frost & Wood, on behalf of George Weatherhead, offered a farm and ‘new’ sawmill for sale or rent, known as ‘the Weatherhead Property’, North Elmsley Township. In 1865, it is listed as owned by Frost & Wood. In 1867 and 1868 the property was owned by J. G. Campbell.

**A Grist Mill** (buildings gone) was apparently the first mill to be located on the east bank of the Tay River above the Port Elmsley Bridge, (Drummond North Elmsley Township, North Elmsley Ward, Con. 7, Lot 13). Subsequently, according to Larry Turner’s study (ref. below), a large stone woolen mill replaced it, between 1857 and 1863, which was owned, over time, by several companies, including: Craig and Campbell; Robert Walker; John Allen (1865); and J. S. Fairgrieve. It eventually became the Fairgrieve and Gemmill woolen factory, and, then, from 1869, R. Gemmill & Sons, until they moved to Perth in 1893.

**The graphite factory** was the next mill to be located on the woolen mill site. In 1901, the **Globe Refining Company** purchased the graphite mine at the corner of Rideau Ferry and Port Elmsley Roads (Con. 6, Lot 21, known by its early name of “Plumbago Mine”), and the Rideau Ferry Shoddy Mill (see below), and added substantial equipment to the Port Elmsley site. They milled graphite there until the 1930s, samples of which may still be seen nearby. See *Appendix D* for additional information.



**Photo, of Graphite Mill (not confirmed), courtesy of Drummond North Elmsley Township**

**H. N. Sherwood Grist & Sawmill** (buildings are gone) – was located on the dam, on the west bank of the river, opposite Gemmel & Fairgrieve’s woolen factory (also known as Gemmill & Fairgrieve). The mill was leased in the 1890s to John Wardrope of Brockville, and the product shipped to Brockville.

This sawmill utilized the opening to the natural snye above Lock Two as a log pond. The snye provides a by-pass around the east side of Port Elmsley – leaving the present river a few hundred meters above the Port Elmsley Bridge, passes the village on the north and east side, and re-enters the river below the hamlet near the old Township Hall. The canal builders placed a dam at the entrance to the snye to maintain water levels at the Lock – which shows on early maps on the east side of the road

to Perth. This snye was noted by early canal surveyors as a potential waste weir for Locks One and two for transferring excess water around Port Elmsley at spring run-off, thus waste weirs were not required here.

There remains a **second, quite-substantial dam** about half way along the snye, on residential property owned by the Jackson family. The purpose of this dam is not known. It would have created a pond/reservoir in the upper half of the snye. An early map shows the Port Elmsley Road extended to the dam and apparently crossing it. As there is no sign of an extended road there now, perhaps, this was simply part of the planned expansion of Port Elmsley.

A third **grist mill** existed in the village – known usually as the **Snyder Mill** – which was owned by B. S. Snyder, and located at the east end of the dam at Lock One of the canal, on the downstream side, beside the mouth of the snye. According to Turner, this was built ‘before 1854’, and had other, subsequent owners. A 1947 paper by Mrs. D. Clements (see ‘Source’, below) notes that the Snyder home was later moved ‘uphill’ from the mill site. Presumably, this was to make room for the large, concrete block house built by the operator of the graphite mill, Rinaldo McConnell, referred to in Appendix E.

The **Rideau Ferry Shoddy Mill**, referred to in the Graphite Mill description, was owned by a Mr. Porrit, and located on the sawmill side of the Lock Two dam, on its upstream side. Shoddy is a low grade fibre made of shredded cloth.

**Lillie’s Foundry and Bolt Factory** was located at Port Elmsley before moving to Perth, around 1878, to Lewis Street (see listing in Perth, above).

### **Local Mills Outside of the Tay Watershed**

**Village of Maberly area**, in present day Tay Valley Township (Con. 8, Lot 5), on the Fall River, had a carding mill, sawmill, grist mill, and shingle mill, located on the south-east side of the hamlet, including:

**John Morrow Mills (perhaps presently known as Dubé Mill)** – sawmill and grist mill

**John McGregor** (of Perth) Mills – sawmill and carding mill

**Francis E. Blair** – a leased carding mill

**Messrs. Goldman** – sawmill and shingle mill

(Source: “The Sawmills of Lanark & Renfrew”, Jack Brown, 1976)

**Fallbrook**, in present Tay Valley Township:

According to the 1880-81 Lanark County Atlas, Fallbrook had a grist mill, sawmill, shingle mill, and two carding mills on the Fall River.

**Village of Lanark and area:**

**Alex Ferguson** grist mill – from 1820 (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas)

**Caldwell Sawmill and Planing Mill** – Lanark Village

**Playfair and Steadman** – sawmill

**Col. Andrew W. Playfair** (104<sup>th</sup> Foot Regiment, New Brunswick Fencible Infantry) – grist & sawmill – at Playfairville, Con, 12, Lot 22, Bathurst Township

**William Doran** sawmill and grist mill – Village of Doran. Presumably, this is the subject of an adv. in November 1862 by a John Doran, to let ‘his grist mill in the

Township of Bathurst, containing three run of stones, and one of the best Smut Machines in the Province. Also his SAW MILL and two Upright Saws, One Edging Saw and Shingle Machine. Both Mills are new, well fitted up, and in good working order; and either or both will be leased to a respectable person.’

**Herrons Mills** – north of Lanark at Clydesville, on the Clyde, Con. 2, Lot 9, by John Herron; a carding mill, grist mill and sawmill (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas).

**Croft Sawmill** - further north; Con. 4, Lot 7 (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas)

**J. W. Anderson & Co.** sawmill – Con. 4, Lot 20 (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas)

#### **Innisville:**

Had two woolen mills, oat mill, grist mill, sawmill, shingle mill, and foundry (1880-81 Lanark County Atlas)

-----

#### **Appendices to this paper:**

- Appendix A “History of the Tay View Mill (Bowes Mill)”, by Arthur Bowes
- Appendix B “The Canadian Bark Works at Christie Lake, AKA The old Bark Factory”
- Appendix C “The Adams Mill (also known as Lower Adams Mill, or Glen Tay Mill)”
- Appendix D “The Port Elmsley Graphite Mill”
- Appendix E “Overview of Early Port Elmsley Factories”
- Appendix F “Allan Sawmill, 127 Peter Street, Perth”

#### **Sources of the information:**

*The Dammed Lakes – an Environmental History of Crow and Bobs Lakes*, by Lloyd B. Jones, Essence Publishing, Belleville, Ontario.

*The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850*, by Larry Turner, Parks Canada, 1984.

*Perth Tradition and Style in Eastern Ontario*, by Larry Turner, Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., Toronto, 1992.

*The Merchants, Professionals and Tradespeople of Perth*, by Gus Quattrocchi, (1997)

*Faded Footsteps – the Early Settlers of Bathurst Township*, by Barbara Jordan (copy available at Algonquin College Library, Perth).

*Glen Tay, Then and Now*, by Barbara Jordan, 1997.

*The Sawmills of Lanark & Renfrew*, by Jack Brown, Mallorytown, 1976.

*A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark*, by Jean S. McGill, T. H. Best Printing Co., Toronto, 1968.

*Historical Atlas Lanark and Renfrew Counties, 1880-81*, H. Belden & Co.

*History of Port Elmsley*, by Mrs. D. Clements, Port Elmsley Women’s Institute, Perth Courier article, May 15, 1947.

*Port Elmsley Notes*, Susan Code McDougall, Tay Valley Township.

**Letter by James D. Slater**, ‘Suptg R C’, to ‘F. Braun, Sec. Dept. Public Works Quebec’, Dated October 21, 1865 (report on the potential for damming Bobs Lake).

**Compiled By David Taylor**

**June 15, 2011**

## **Appendix A: History of Tay View Mill (Bowes Mill) by Arthur Bowes**

The Deed for this mill site was drawn from the Crown in 1823 by Archibald Fraser, who erected the first dam and saw mill. Little is recorded of his work and in 1833 he sold to Abel Mott for £50. Mott conducted an extensive lumber and timber business, but was always in financial trouble. In 1835 Mott sold to Henry Glass for £400, who resold to Joshua Adams in 1839. Adams rebuilt the mill and ran it successfully until 1843 when he sold to Adam Scott Elliott for £650. Three Elliott Bros. ran the mills – a grist mill, barley mill, and saw mill - until 1856, then sold them to John Allan for £3000.

The Elliott's advertisement in the Perth Courier "For Sale" read as follows:

"Grist mill with 2 run of stones – cost £1000  
 Made 1000 bbls flour – 23 H.P. Wheel  
 1 saw mill 40 H.P. 1 saw £150, Cut 70,000 Board Feet  
 1 barley mill produced 2000 bbls.  
 On the Tay River, accessible by roads from Concession 3 and 1 of Bathurst  
 Twp."

The Allans owned and operated the mills until 1868, and kept it in good repair. They also built the fine dwelling on the north side of the river. James Laurie purchased it in 1883 and continued to operate until 1891, when he sold to Louis Badour. Badour cut all the oak, pine and easy to reach timber, and in 1895 sold the 4 acre lot (on Lot 17, Concession 1) and water rights to the Town of Perth, who rebuilt the dam and Grist Mill and installed a new 50" Laffel water wheel of 250 H.P. The Town converted the old grist mill to a hydro generating plant, and supplied the town with its first electricity, in 1896, using a 250 K.W. 133 Cycle 2200 Volt generator. The Town operated the plant, until June of 1922.

The power site lay idle until 1929 when Anson Bowes rented it and set up a grist mill, finally purchasing the property, in 1932, with all the water rights. It was operated as a grist mill successfully through the difficult 1930s – operating 24 hours a day, until a fire in 1952 destroyed the building and all the machinery.

The building was promptly restored and is now being preserved by the Bowes family as an historic Site and Museum, and a tribute to the ingenuity of the Pioneers - for the pleasure and information of future generations.

By A. Bowes, Tay Valley Township

## **Appendix B: The Canadian Bark Works at Christie Lake (also known as 'The Old Bark Factory')**

The property on which this mill was built was purchased from an Oliver Burns, who had settled at Christie Lake in 1828 on Lot 2, Con. 3, Bathurst Township, on the north side of the lake, on Gravelly Bay<sup>1</sup>.

The mill was built in 1868 by a group of business men of Perth, including Thomas Aspden, Alexander Morris, William J. Morris, Captain John Manion, John S. Hart - and a Boston company, Hood, Swift and Company.

The mill was managed by a George Templeton, who had learned the trade at a similar plant in St. John, New Brunswick, also owned by Hood, Swift and Company. The clerk was a John Brown, and his son, Robert, was the engineer from 1869 to 1870.

Christie Lake was selected because the area was said to have had a good supply of hemlock. The mill extracted tannin from hemlock bark, which was used for tanning hides. The product was shipped abroad, and also used at the Templeton tannery in Perth.

An article in the "Canadian Illustrated News", dated February 3, 1872<sup>2</sup> reported a fire at the plant in November 1871 that completely destroyed the plant, including equipment, for a loss of \$25,000, of which only \$6,000 was insured. A large quantity of hemlock bark, valued at \$20,000, was saved as it had been stored elsewhere. This article goes on to state that this market for hemlock bark had been an excellent source of revenue for local farmers. This article gives the ownership of the factory at this time to 'Cooke Extract Company', and the plant managed by Mr. J. Cooke. (The article was accompanied by a photo of the plant by 'Blackburn of Perth' - not found.)

The Bark Works closed in 1874 - according to one source because the supply of hemlock had been exhausted<sup>3</sup>. However, other sources have stated that the mill went bankrupt earlier than that.

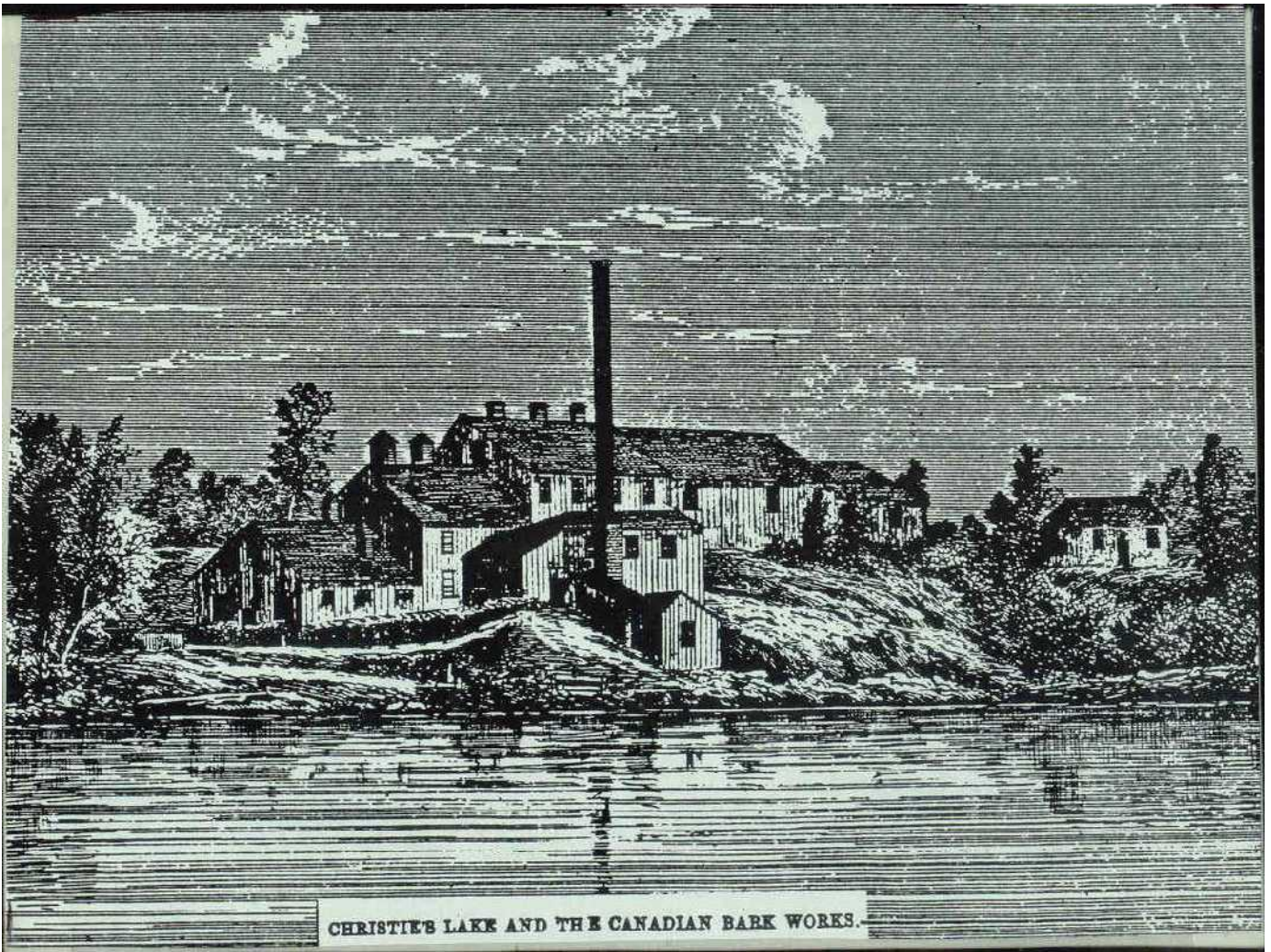
The 1880 Lanark Atlas lists the owner of the property as John Brown, adjoining the property of George Palmer. In 2010, the property is owned by Gray Palmer.

---

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Illustrated News", Montreal, dated February 3, 1872, Vol. 15, No. 5

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Illustrated News", Montreal, dated February 3, 1872, Vol. 15, No. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Perth Courier article, November 21, 1988, 'Portraits of Our Heritage', by Michael Taylor.



Lithograph provided by Mr. Gray Palmer, the present owner of the former Bark Works property at Christie Lake.

## Appendix C:

### The Adams Mill (also known as Lower Adams Mill, or Glen Tay Mill)



(Photo – Ralph Buttrum)

The Adams Mill is located on the Tay River, in the Hamlet of Glen Tay, which was known as 'Adamsville' at one time, in Bathurst Ward of present Tay Valley Township, on Con. 2, Lot 20.

The 'mill' began as a sawmill and grist mill built by Abraham Parsall prior to 1820. That year, Colonel Joshua Adams of Perth acquired the site. Over time, the hamlet came to include five mills - a grist mill, oatmeal mill, sawmill, tannery 'stores', wagon shop, blacksmith, and woolen mill.

The woolen factory, which apparently was several stories high, employed 50 men at one time and produced 65,000 to 100,000 fine tweeds per year (Lanark County Atlas 1880). Their tweeds won first prize the first Industrial Exhibition in Toronto and also in the Dominion Exhibition at Ottawa in 1879.

In 1863, the mill complex was purchased by Henry Moorehouse – and again in 1872. Between this, in 1865, it was owned by John Hargrave, who ran a sawmill, grist mill and carding mill. The sawmill is shown on the north side of the river, in the Lanark County Atlas 1880-81, whereas all of the other mills were apparently on south side.

Later the sawmill and a planing mill were operated by Frost & Wood, and the product was 'rafted' to Perth. The mill became a hydroelectric plant in the late 1800s. In 1897, it was acquired by Perth Electric and Water Power Co., and produced power apparently until 1918.

In 1926, the dam gave way, taking out Glen Tay Bridge and flooding parts of Perth.

The mill has been beautifully restored, by the Drennan family.

## Appendix D: The Port Elmsley Graphite Mill

The ruins of the graphite Mill are still apparent just upstream from the present Port Elmsley Bridge, on the east side of the river.

A report by Perth geologist Donald F. Sherwood, titled “Geology and Mineral Deposits of the Tay River Watershed”, which may be seen on the website [www.tayriver.org](http://www.tayriver.org), provides the following information on the early graphite operation:

“In Ontario, the first graphite discovery was made in 1870 in the Globe Mine on Lots 21 and 22, Concession 6 of old North Elmsley Township, - - - on the Rideau Ferry Road. This deposit was found at the crest of an anticlinal fold in crystalline limestone, and was worked by the Globe Graphite Co. in 1870-75. A graphite mill was built at nearby Rideau Ferry in 1872, superintended by a Mr. Robb for three years. A two-storey mill, 60' X 160', was built, with a ten-stamp battery operated by a five horse-power steam engine. Some graphite was obtained from deposits on the other side of Big Rideau Lake in Leeds County. Belden's Historical Atlas of Lanark County (1880) states that, although the operation had ceased for the time, "the deposit is practically unlimited, with the yield of graphite being about six per cent". The deposit was sold to the International Mining Co., and worked again in 1901-03 and 1916-20. - - - - The Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines reported in 1999 that there were 500,000 tonnes of ore reserves grading 7% graphite remaining below the mined out portion of the deposit, to a depth of 90 m.”

[Note: There are obvious differences between these two histories in the names of the companies and their sequence, and dates.]

In 1901, the Globe Refining Company purchased the graphite mine near Rideau Ferry, at the corner of Rideau Ferry Road and Port Elmsley Road (Con. 6, Lot 21, Elmsley). In 1870, this mine was feeding a new graphite mill – then known as ‘plumbago’ or ‘black lead’ - located on the north side of the Rideau Ferry bridge (at the east corner). It employed almost 50 people and had a ‘ten stamp battery’ and five HP engine, and produced three to four tone per day. This mill had ceased business by 1880.

Globe also bought the Shoddy Mill, adding substantial equipment, and processed graphite in Port Elmsley until the 1930s. A discarded pile of this graphite is located on the private property of the by-pass, presumably having been moved there after the plant closed.

D. Taylor, April 15, 2011

## Appendix E: Overview of Early Port Elmsley Factories (information provided by Susan Code, Linda Myers, Larry Turner, and other sources)

The following information on early factories and mills in Port Elmsley has been drawn in part from materials provided by Susan Code, historian and author, and resident of Tay Valley Township, and Linda Myers, resident of Port Elmsley, graphic artist (and designer of the interpretive sign on the First Tay Canal, located in the village), the late Larry Turner, author and historian, and other, public sources.

At various times through Port Elmsley's history, there were 11 mills and factories in the village, often built on the foundation of an earlier mill. These included: a shingle mill, two sawmills, a cooperage, two grist mills, a graphite factory, a foundry and bolt factory, a woolen mill, a shoddy mill, and a cheese factory—plus two blacksmiths. The following is intended to provide additional detail on some of these commercial operations, complementing the information in the main text of this paper.

As noted in the text, the **Weatherhead Sawmill and Shingle Mill**, construction of which started in 1829, were the first mills in Port Elmsley (known as Fishing Falls, then Pike Falls, and, later, Barbadoes), located a few hundred yards upstream from the village. Although **Frost & Wood**, a foundry company from Smiths Falls, apparently took over the mill later in the 1800s, the Weatherhead family was still involved in 1863, when Frost & Wood offered the operation and farm property for sale on behalf of George Weatherhead. In 1890, the mill is listed as owned by **Frost & Wood**: the 60" circular sawmill was described as having 28m capacity (taken as 28,000 board feet), cutting hemlock, pine, and hardwoods, and the shingle mill had a capacity of 20,000 shingles per day. The shingles were moved directly to a wharf, one-third mile away, on an inclined tramway. The supporting dam was the first dam on the Tay River; in 1834, it was replaced by a new dam, and became Lock three of the First Tay Canal.

The next sawmill, just downstream from Weatherhead's, and built before 1854<sup>4</sup> - possibly in 1835<sup>5</sup> - was the **H. N. Sherwood Sawmill**, located beside their **grist mill**, on the west side of the Lock Two dam. In the late 1800s, it was leased by John Wardrope of Brockville. The lumber from here is said to have been conveyed by trolleys on a wooden railway, then hauled by horse team to "Lavender's Point," and loaded onto steamships.<sup>6</sup> Susan Code reports that this was a popular swimming spot, and boys would "borrow" boards from the company's lumber yard.

Across the dam from the Sherwood mill was another **grist mill**. Its name and construction date are not known; it was later expanded into the large stone woolen mill, and operated by various owners, including Gemmills, and, later, a Mr. Fall(sp?) from Fallbrook, until 1893. It employed up to 100 people.<sup>7</sup> When **Globe Refining Company** bought the property, they installed approximately \$100,000 worth of machinery.<sup>8</sup> A Rinaldo McConnell became the manager, and built the "mill house," on Mill Street, on the south side of Port Elmsley. The mill employed on average 35 to 50 men, as teams of

<sup>4</sup> Larry Turner "The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850" based on April 1854 map of Port Elmsley.

<sup>5</sup> "Rideau Canal Submerged Cultural Resources Inventory", Parks Canada

<sup>6</sup> Susan Code, historian and author, "Port Elmsley Notes"

<sup>7</sup> Susan Code, historian and author, "Port Elmsley Notes"

<sup>8</sup> Susan Code, historian and author, "Port Elmsley Notes"

horses hauled the ore from the Ferry Road mine to the mill. By 1908, Globe had bought most of the land in the village, providing, amongst other things, housing for employees and stables and pasture for the horses. By 1924, the supply of graphite began to run out, and the mill - and presumably the mine - were abandoned after 1930. Between 1930 and 1936, all of the mill property and machinery was sold for taxes by township. In the late 1930s or early 1940s, Gladys (Code) and Hugh Ferguson of Toronto purchased the Mill House, and the large adjoining property on the Tay, including the site of the snye and its dam on the east side of the village, where they lived from 1946 until their deaths in the early '60s.

By 1854,<sup>9</sup> a third grist mill had been built in the village—the **Snyder Mill**—located on the east side of the dam at the first lock of the canal, where the snye enters the Tay. Apparently, the mill had, in time, other owners and names. Neither the mill or its foundations remain today.

Susan Code reports that **Lone Star**, built in the village in 1882, was the first cheese factory in the township. The milk was drawn by horses and wagons from Rideau Ferry, Glen View, Buttermilk Hill, and other points. This frame structure, located on the south shore of Tay, was erected by P. W. Strong of Brockville and M. K. Everet, of Smiths Falls, and was owned and operated by R. H. Livingston between 1905 and 1912. It was one of the 12 cheese factories that contributed to the Mammoth Cheese. The building was destroyed by fire on April 27, 1952, but had not been used for several years.

David Taylor  
Glen Tay, Ontario  
June 4, 2011

---

<sup>9</sup> Larry Turner “The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830–1850”(ditto 1854 map)

## **Appendix F: Allan Sawmill at 127 Peter Street, Perth**

(Information provided by ‘**The Merchants, Professionals and Tradespeople of Perth**’, by Gus Quattrocchi, 1997)

The Allan Sawmill was located at 127 Peter Street in Perth beginning in 1873. The photo in the main text of this paper appears to show this mill, taken from beside the river on the golf course side of the river.

Mr. Quattrocchi states that the mill had two stories, with a long log ramp from the river to the second storey. The Tay River – wide at this point - provided the log pond at this point, receiving logs by river.

Commencing in 1873, the mill sawed lumber for barrel staves. In 1884, it is listed as the Wm. Allan Saw, Lath and Shingle Mill. In 1889, the mill is rebuilt from a fire – presumably the same year. William and Francis Allan are listed as owners of the mill in 1890 – and in 1897 it had another fire. In 1890, there is a listing showing the mill with relatively small capacity – 4m (4,000 board feet) – cutting pine, hemlock and hardwoods.

In 1928, Mr. Quattrocchi’s book states that the mill required 10,000 logs – and in 1932 it has the name W. Allan & Son.

In 1941 the mill was demolished.