From the Straits of Mackinac to Georgian Bay: 
300 years of Métis history

Report on the origins and evolution of 
the Penetanguishene area Métis community

submitted to Louise Goulding,
President, Moon River Métis Council
of the Métis Nation of Ontario

by Micheline Marchand,
in association with Daniel Marchildon

Box 29, Mactier, Ont. P0C 1H0
Phone : (705) 746-4974
Fax : (705) 746-7106
e-mail : moonisland@hughes.net

December, 2006
Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank:

- Louise Goulding and the Moon River Métis Council for initiating this research project,
- Scott Carpenter, Community Development Officer with the Métis Nation of Ontario for the Georgian Bay region, for his help and enthusiasm
- and Pat McArthur for her assistance and comments.

Cover

Left: Mr. Pete Grisdale, Métis trapper, was born February 6th, 1920 at Penetanguishene, Ontario and is a descendent of the Gendron family of the historic Métis Community of Penetanguishene, Ontario.

Right: Mr. John “Jack” LePage, Métis fisherman, was born October 1st, 1887 at Penetanguishene, Ontario and is a descendent of the Trudeau family of the historic Métis Community of Penetanguishene, Ontario.

This project was funded through the support of the Métis Nation of Ontario Training Initiatives and the Government of Canada.

ISBN 978-0-9782769-0-4

©2006 Moon River Métis Council
On December 5, 2004, a meeting was held in Mactier, Ontario for Métis people in the Parry Sound / Muskoka area. It was at that meeting, with much enthusiasm and eagerness, that the Moon River Métis Council was born.

It was on this day that the interim council was elected for a one year term. The council consisted of; President Louise Goulding, Chair Leslie Emerson, Senator Ruth Wagner-Millington, Secretary/Treasurer Lisa McCron, Women’s Representative Verna Porter, Youth Representative Bradley Goulding, Councilor Mike Nolan, Councilor Dale Nolan and Councilor Kim Belecque.

The Moon River represents one of the main rivers running through our traditional territory and connects the Métis citizens of the islands and shores of Georgian Bay to those on the mainland. It also would have been a river that our ancestors used as one of their highways.

On April 16, 2005, the Moon River Métis Council became the 32nd Council to sign a Charter with the Métis Nation of Ontario.

In December of that same year, the one year term of the interim council was completed and the Moon River Métis council would hold its second election. The new council would consist of: President Louise Goulding, Chair Brian Leduc, Senator Ruth Wagner-Millington, Treasurer Lisa McCron, Women’s Representative Verna Porter, Councilor Larry Duval, Councilor Dan Quesnelle and Councilor Irene Peel.

It would be this newly elected council who would take on the task of having our history, our culture and our pride recorded for ever. For this I thank them. I thank them for their tremendous support and their great passion in moving this great Nation forward.

I must also thank Scott Carpenter, Regional Employment & Training Coordinator with the Métis Nation of Ontario Training Initiatives, for his support and assistance on this project. His enthusiasm for this project matches my own!

I thank Micheline Marchand and Daniel Marchildon for their interest and dedication in researching and writing this report. It truly is exciting that we have a report about Métis written by Métis!

Enjoy.

Louise Goulding
President
Moon River Métis Council
Table of Contents

A. Executive Summary...........................................................................................................................................v

1. Notes on the research and sources .........................................................................................................................1

2. The ethnogenesis of the Penetanguishene area Métis community............................................................................4
   2.1 Initial contact between Europeans and First Nations people in Huronia (Southern Georgian Bay) ...............4
   2.2 Ethnogenesis of the Upper Great Lakes Métis.................................................................................................4
      2.2.1 Birth of the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes..................................................................................4
      2.2.2 Michilimackinac (prior to 1780)..........................................................................................12
      2.2.3 Mackinac Island (1780-1796)........................................................................................15
      2.2.4 St. Joseph Island (1796-1812)........................................................................................17
      2.2.5 Drummond Island (1815-1828)........................................................................................23

3. The Métis community in Penetanguishene (from the 1820s).................................................................................36
   3.1 Before the 1820s ........................................................................................................................................36
   3.2 The move from Drummond Island (1828-1829). ........................................................................................39
   3.3 Land issues sparked by the Métis...........................................................................................................55
   3.4 Métis collective action in Penetanguishene ...............................................................................................58
   3.5 The difficulty in identifying the Métis of Penetanguishene ...........................................................................64
   3.6 Religion, Marriage and Intermarriage .......................................................................................................65
   3.7 Education ..................................................................................................................................................69
   3.8 Métis ties in Georgian Bay and the Upper Great Lakes ................................................................................70

4. The way of life and main occupations of the Penetanguishene area Métis community and how they were transformed .................................................................78
   4.1 Fur trade ..................................................................................................................................................78
   4.2 First Nation language and English Interpreters .....................................................................................84
   4.3 Fishing ..................................................................................................................................................84
   4.4 Farming ................................................................................................................................................111
   4.5 Lumber industry ................................................................................................................................112
   4.6 Hunting, fishing and travelling guides ....................................................................................................114
   4.7 Other occupations ................................................................................................................................116

5. Regarding the definition of the two concepts, “ethnogenesis” and “effective control” ...........................................119
   5.1 The period of “effective control” as it applies in the case of the Penetanguishene area Métis community ..........121

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of original grantees of Penetanguishene Park Lots according to Surveyor General Office Map of June 8, 1830.................................................................128

Appendix 2: Information on Penetanguishene land grantees with Métis connections..............................................129

Appendix 3: 1834 list of Penetanguishene land owners granted title to their lots.......................................................131

Appendix 4: Residents of Penetanguishene for 1832 as listed in The City of Toronto and the Home District commercial directory and register, for 1837..................................................132

Appendix 5: Names of parents found in the baptismal register for Ste. Anne’s Parish in 1835........................................133

Appendix 6: Employees of the Penetanguishene Military and Naval Establishments with Métis surnames.................134

Appendix 7: Chronology of relevant dates and events............................................................................................135

Maps

Map 1: Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Mackinac Straits area....................................................................................3
Map 2: Mackinac Straits and surrounding area .........................................................................................................11
Map 3: Georgian Bay ..............................................................................................................................................35
Map 4: Surveyor General Office Map of June 8, 1830 Penetanguishene ......................................................................47
Map 5: Historie Métis and voyageur place names in Penetanguishene Bay...................................................................60

Bibliography.........................................................................................................................................................138
A. Executive Summary

A.1 Regarding the sources and the research

Although many publications dealing with the Penetanguishene area refer to the voyageurs/Métis/French-Canadian community established in Southern Georgian Bay there has been, thus far, little detailed research on the Métis and their history. Also, this lack of information is even greater in respect to the evolution of the Métis during the 1900s.

➢ To fill this gap will require an oral history research project that should be carried out in the very near future in the larger Georgian Bay area, and in particular in the communities along its eastern shore, before those individuals who can supply this critical oral history disappear.
➢ To facilitate further genealogical research and self-identification of Métis, a list of positive Métis ancestors (from the 1820s and 1830s) should be established and made available to researchers.

A.2 The objectives of the report

The goal of the report was to examine three specific questions with regard to the Métis of the Penetanguishene area:

a) Ethnogenesis
b) Effective control
c) Occupations

A.2.1 Ethnogenesis of the Georgian Bay Métis

Although there were French Europeans living in the Southern Georgian Bay area between 1610 and 1650, it is impossible to know with certainty if this contact gave rise to mixed race, métis children. Although this is likely, these métis children would have remained in their First Nation families to be raised by their First Nation mothers.

➢ Therefore, there is no evident link between the Upper Great Lakes Métis and the mixed race children that might have been born during this period of initial contact.
➢ The origins of the Penetanguishene Métis community can be traced back to the birth of the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes in general, and in particular the Michilimackinac, Mackinac Island (Mackinac straits in Northern Michigan today) and Sault Ste. Marie area at the beginning of the 1700s.

* In the context of this report, the Penetanguishene area refers to an area encompassing the present day town of Penetanguishene but also its environs, including Tay and Tiny Townships, as well as neighbouring shoreline communities along the southeastern shore of Georgian Bay such as Midland, Victoria Harbour, Waubaushene, Port McNicoll, and Honey Harbour.

** We have used the term Métis, with a capital m, throughout this report to designate the people of European and Aboriginal parentage of the Great Lakes region or the Western provinces and their descendants, except when spelled otherwise in direct quotations from other sources.
The early workers of the fur trade (French, French-Canadian and later English, Scottish and other Europeans) adapted to life in the Upper Great Lakes and, through prolonged residency in the country, developed relationships with the First Nations people. They would often travel to the Upper Great Lakes for a temporary stay or contract but, after entering into a relationship with a First Nation woman and fathering children, they remained. Mutual consent, country marriages became the normal practice in the Upper Great Lakes area between European men and First Nation or Métis women and also later Métis men and First Nation or Métis women. Despite attempts by the fur trading companies to discourage these relationships and marriages, in the late 1700s and early 1800s the number of country marriages rose, as did the number of Métis offspring in the larger fur trade communities of the Upper Great Lakes. Many Métis were employed in occupations oriented towards the fur trade.

Four phases preceded the establishment of the Métis in Penetanguishene:

A. Michilimackinac (1720 to 1780) and Mackinac Island (1780-1796)
B. St. Joseph Island (between 1796 and 1812)
C. Mackinac Island (1812-1815)
D. Drummond Island (1815-1828)

French missionaries were in the Mackinac Straits area as early as the 1670s with a mission at St. Ignace founded in 1671. The mission was located on Mackinac Island and then moved to the mainland just north of Michilimackinac, on the northern side of the Straits. The French military established Fort Buade there in 1690. In 1715, the French moved their fort to Michilimackinac on the south side of the Straits. The first Métis of the Langlade line, Charles Michel, was born in the area in 1729. This is the oldest known Métis line that stretches from Michilimackinac to Penetanguishene today.

After the Seven Years’ War between France and Britain, the British took control of Fort Michilimackinac in 1761. During the American Revolution, between the fall of October 1779 and the fall of 1781 the British military moved the fort to Mackinac Island, thus creating a second community (also called Michilimackinac until the 1800s). The signing of the Jay Treaty, in November 1794, between the British and American governments forced the British to hand over Mackinac Island and its fort to the Americans in 1796. The British garrison relocated itself on St. Joseph Island, near Sault Ste. Marie, and approximately 60 km to the northeast of Mackinac Island. A number of fur traders and their families lived on the Island at the base of the Fort.

In the summer of 1812, war broke out between England and the United States. On July 15, 1812, the commander of Fort St. Joseph, Charles Roberts decided that his best defence was an offence. Thus, the British moved to take back Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island. Some Métis of the St. Joseph Island and Sault Ste. Marie area were among the 180 voyageurs who took part in the capture of Fort Mackinac from the Americans on July 17, 1812. A number of them signed up as members of the Michigan Fencibles, a locally raised unit of volunteers consisting mainly of fur trade employees. The volunteers of the Michigan Fencibles also participated in the taking of Prairie du Chien, at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers, from the Americans in July 1813. A list of the Michigan Fencibles at the time they were disbanded, includes 65 names, and of these, at least 21 are those of people who will later be residing in Penetanguishene after 1828. The Métis and the French-Canadian voyageurs fighting on the British side chose to do so to defend their interests, since the fur-trade economy was being threatened by the border issues between Canada and the United States.

In July 1814, the Americans landed on St. Joseph Island and burned the fort and the stores of the North West Company. A few weeks later, they were unsuccessful in trying to take Fort...
Mackinac back from the British. The signing of the Treaty of Ghent between Britain and the United States in December of 1814 marked the end of the war. On July 18, 1815, the British handed Mackinac Island back to the Americans. The British soldiers moved to Drummond Island where they were joined by civilians, fur traders and their families, once again. Eventually, there would be about forty homes built next to the fort. Some of the home builders were traders, some government (Indian Department) officials and some military families.

Life on Drummond Island for the civilian population repeated the familiar pattern of a large transient population surge in summer followed by a much smaller winter resident population as was the case at Michilimackinac, Mackinac Island, and St. Joseph Island. The economic activity was largely centered on the trade with the First Nations who came to trade and receive presents.

By the late 1820s, it is estimated that there were ten thousand to fifteen thousand residents of Métis communities south and west of Lakes Superior and Huron. At that time, Penetanguishene had few inhabitants. Prior to the naval base established in Penetanguishene in 1817, and the arrival of the Métis in 1828, there is evidence of the presence of fur traders in the general area, at Matchedash Bay, at least in the 1770s and possibly as early as the 1730s. The British signed a treaty with the First Nation people confirming the surrender of a tract of land and the harbour on the Penetanguishene Peninsula on May 22, 1798.

Some people, Métis and others are known to have come to the area prior to the removal from Drummond Island. Although the British military knew that Drummond Island was to be ceded to the Americans as early as 1822, it did nothing to prepare for the withdrawal before the last minute.

- In the fall of 1828, the British hired two boats, the Wellington and the Alice Hackett, to move their troops and some of the civilians to Penetanguishene. The latter boat was shipwrecked before reaching its destination, but all escaped.

- Forty-three individuals from Drummond Island, some Métis, were granted 20 acre lots at the southwest end of Penetanguishene Harbour. The move involved some 300 Métis and voyageurs, men, women, and children.

Those that didn’t sail on the hired ships made their own way by bateau or canoe to Penetanguishene. On arrival, many camped temporarily at Barrack’s point (today Asylum Point). Of the estimated 75 families that took part in the move, just over half of them, or 43, received land. At the meeting of the Executive Council Chamber at Toronto on June 30, 1834, 25 landowners (voyageurs and at least 3 Métis) were awarded title to their lands.

The original Drummond Island community is comprised of a mixture of people, French-Canadians, other Europeans, First Nations people, and Métis.

The tendency of the Métis to marry other Métis would seem to indicate the closeness between members of the Métis community and also that they are either not interested, or not able, to marry women of the local French-Canadian population.

A petition of 22 “half breeds residing in the Town of Penetanguishene” to the Governor General dated January 27, 1840 show the Métis collectively organizing and claiming rights based on their status as a distinct “class” of people separate from the First Nations but entitled to “the advantage in presents issued to the Indians” in view of their “poor circumstances” and proven loyalty to the Crown as part of the Militia.

In the late 1840s the Crown started to feel it was necessary to settle questions involving land titles along the north shore of Lake Huron, including Georgian Bay.

- This lead to the signing of the Robinson-Huron Treaties in 1850 and the First Nations ceding most of the territory between Sault Ste. Marie and Penetanguishene. The
treaty included a large tract of land that encompassed areas frequented and lived in by the Métis of Georgian Bay. This forced the Métis to choose between being either considered White or First Nation by the government. Ultimately, this also entailed an end to the ambivalent squatter status and encouraged Upper Great Lakes Métis to become land owners, a measure of effective control.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Métis people from Penetanguishene and elsewhere began to establish themselves in the communities along the east shore of Georgian Bay, like Port Severn. The Métis were not only spread out among various communities on the east shore of Georgian Bay, but some also established themselves in the Southampton area on the east shore of Lake Huron as well as in the Owen Sound area on the west side of Georgian Bay.

- Although the Métis community became based in Penetanguishene during the 1820-1840 period, the area it evolved in expanded to include Georgian Bay as well as its traditional homeland in the Upper Great Lakes.

In 1901, the 430 declared Métis in the Penetanguishene area are found in three main centres: 94 (22 %) in Baxter Township (Honey Harbour), 124 (29 %) in Tay Township (Midland, Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour), and 180 (42 %) in Tiny Township (including Penetanguishene).

The reticence to self-identify as Métis in the late 1800s and early 1900s can be attributed to some extent to the negative view of the Métis held by white Anglo-Protestant Ontarians, in particular following the Northwest Rebellion and the hanging of Louis Riel in 1885, and the strong influence of the Protestant Orange Lodge in many areas of Ontario.

- According to the 2001 Census statistics, there are 48,340 people in Ontario who have declared Métis origins. Of these, there are 4,230 in Simcoe County. As well, the total Métis population of North Simcoe (Tiny Township, Penetanguishene, Midland and Tay Township) is 2,750.

- Of the 12,000 people officially registered to date with the Métis Nation of Ontario, around 2,000 of these are located in the area of the Georgian Bay Métis Council and are, for the most part, descendants of the original Penetanguishene Métis community.

A.2.3 Occupations

Over the century stretching from their arrival in the late 1820s to the 1920s the Métis in the Penetanguishene area were to continue certain traditional occupations but, for economic reasons, they also developed new ones.

- 25 men with Métis surnames were on the payroll of the Naval and Military establishments working at a dozen various occupations, in particular as: interpreter, volunteer militia, blacksmith, roofer, baker, canoe man, guide, fisherman, pilot, and clerk.

Interpreters

For the Métis, raised in a multicultural and multilingual context, it was quite natural that they should be called upon to act as interpreters between Whites and First Nation peoples. It was the case for several Penetanguishene Métis. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as First Nation
people became more and more able to speak English, the services of Métis as interpreters were required less.

**Fur trade**

The fur trade evolved considerably in the 1820s and after. Independent and company traders, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, set up shop and traveled around Georgian Bay. During the early 1830s, over two thousand First Nation people gathered annually for the present giving ceremony at Penetanguishene, where by 1844, there were four independent traders, including Métis Andrew Mitchell.

- Although Penetanguishene continued as a fur trading centre into the 1860s and up until 1881 (at least in Alfred Thompson’s store) this trade seems to have declined steadily after the 1840s. Aside from the participation of Andrew Mitchell it is difficult to establish to what extent other Métis in the Penetanguishene area took part in this trade either as trappers or intermediaries.

**Fishing**

Fishing was already being carried out in Penetanguishene Bay by at least as early as 1829. Several sources point to the beginnings of a commercial fishery in Georgian Bay in the 1830s.

- Following 1834, there was a general decline in the fur trade, and fishing became lucrative, employing French, First Nation, and Métis people.
- From the very beginning of the commercial fishery in the Upper Great Lakes, some Métis participated as fishermen, but the extent of their participation remains very difficult to quantify since, prior to the implementation of the licensing system, and the beginning of the census which included occupations, fishermen were not listed anywhere.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, commercial fishing would become a large scale industry in Georgian Bay, fueling economic growth. The first laws governing the fisheries were passed in Ontario in 1857 and 1858 and lead to the issuing of fishing licenses. This new system would make many Métis and First Nation fishers, who did not take out licenses, illegal.

- By 1868, some 450 men were engaged in the Georgian Bay fishery and the catch consisted of 1.2 million lb of whitefish, 707 thousand lb of trout and 8 thousand lb of pickerel. The 1880s heralded the heyday of the commercial fishery on Georgian Bay which was to last about two decades. Between 1881-1893, the number of licensed fishermen went from 250 to 641, the record level.
- 1891 Census data for Tiny and Tay Townships and Penetanguishene and Midland, show that in these municipalities, there were a total of 64 men that declared fisherman as their occupation. Of this total, over a third, or 23 had Métis surnames. Other Métis, on the Lake Huron side of the Bruce peninsula, were also engaged at the same time in commercial fishing.

During the 1890s, overseers all over Georgian Bay made a number of references to illegal fishing by Métis and First Nation fishermen from the Penetanguishene area. At the end of the
nineteenth century, the fishery collapsed due to overfishing, and between 1890 and 1915 the number of men employed by the industry was cut in half.

In the 1920s and 1930s there are again some Métis names that appear among those being given commercial fishing licenses in Georgian Bay. Nevertheless, the sharp decline in the Georgian Bay fishery continued and accelerated during the period from the late 1940s to the beginning of the 1960s.

➢ In summary, the historical evidence points to the existence of a commercial fishery in Georgian Bay as early as the 1830s and Métis participation in this industry throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The historical record shows fishing as a harvesting activity carried out by members of the Métis community along Georgian Bay throughout the period.

Farming

Although some Métis tried to live off the land as farmers, their success seems to have been limited. In conclusion, it would seem that the number of Métis who continued farming throughout the latter half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, were not considerable, indicating that a majority of the Métis and their descendants preferred other occupations. It would seem significant that the number of Métis farmers dropped after 1891, the period when both the lumber and the fishing booms were at their height.

Lumber industry

Sawmills developed in the Penetanguishene area mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued to be an important employer right up until the early 1930s. The industry grew steadily and peaked in the 1890s as did the work force it employed. By 1907, Penetanguishene had six sawmills. During this period there were also large sawmills in Victoria Harbour and Waubaushene. Some Métis families from Penetanguishene moved east and north along the coast of Georgian Bay to find work in lumber camps and sawmills. This mobility seems to have encompassed the eastern shore of Georgian Bay as a whole.

➢ The 1911 Census shows that in Tiny Township and Penetanguishene, of 72 individuals with Métis surnames, 34 indicated their place of work as a sawmill or the woods in the lumber trade.
➢ Census data and lumber company records indicate a strong presence of Métis descendants among the lumber and sawmill workers in Penetanguishene and the surrounding area during the peak years of this industry.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as this industry grew it impacted negatively on the marine environment of Georgian Bay. This, in all likelihood, would have encouraged some Métis to turn from fishing to lumbering as a source of revenue.

Guiding

Throughout the 1800s and 1900s a number of Métis on the shores of Georgian Bay have used their knowledge and interest in the land and water to work as fishing, hunting and tourist guides.
A.2.4 Effective control

The notion of effective control involves, among others, the three following principals:

a) The existence of an historic Métis community, that is a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, who lived together in the same geographic area and shared a common way of life.

b) This historic Métis community must be shown to have existed as an identifiable Métis community prior to the time when Europeans effectively established political and legal control in a particular area.

c) And continuity between the historic practice of a Métis community and the contemporary right to continue this practice.

In the landmark Powley case, the period of effective control was found to encompass a span of 40 years between 1815 and 1850, the time of the consolidation of control by the British which culminates in 1850 in the signing of the Robinson-Huron Treaties. Because of the common origin of the two communities (Penetanguishene and Sault Ste. Marie) as part of the Upper Great Lakes Métis, this period applies to some extent to the Penetanguishene Métis as well. However, in the case of the latter there are other factors to consider that are specific to them.

In the Willison case in the British Columbia Provincial court, in March 2005, the three events that led to effective control between 1858 and 1864 are: the appointment of a customs officer and a judge (by the government) and an economic development, the gold rush.

The Laviolette case in Saskatchewan (2005) found the date of effective control to be 1912 when the government established townships and a new land system in the Green Lake area in northern Saskatchewan. Also this case showed the existence of a “regional historic rights bearing Métis community” identified as Northwest Saskatchewan, and defined as a triangle of fixed communities on Green Lake. It was shown that the Métis within this triangle were highly mobile and that they moved often and traveled far for food, trapping and work. This latter finding may have a particular significance with regard to establishing the existence of a larger, Georgian Bay-Lake Huron Métis community.

In our view there are five possible dates and events to be considered in determining the period of effective control that best applies to the Penetanguishene Métis.

A. Treaties, negotiations and relations with First Nations.

B. The incorporation of a local municipal government with jurisdiction over the Métis and other landowners following the creation of Tiny Township in 1842 and the United Township of Tiny and Tay in 1851.

C. The beginning of the lumber industry in the area (1860s).

The lumber trade in and around Penetanguishene experienced a considerable boom as of the 1860s and soon became the area’s main industry. This was encouraged by the Crown through the sale or lease of timber rights along the northern and eastern shores of Georgian Bay. The participation of Métis men in this sector of the economy marks a shift in their lifestyle.

D. The period when the Métis / voyageurs start to leave the immediate Penetanguishene area.

Beginning in the late 1840s a significant number of Métis families moved either into other areas along the shore of Georgian Bay or elsewhere in or out of Simcoe County altogether.

E. The arrival of other settlers in the area (Tiny Township in particular) in the 1840s and 1850s.
The Crown encouraged settlement in North Simcoe through the surveying and granting of lots. It is to be noted that the French-Canadian settlers that took up lots in Tiny Township between 1841 and 1854 seemed to have received better lands than those granted to the Métis in 1828. Besides being less suitable for agricultural purposes, the 20 acre lots granted to the Métis were smaller than the usual 200 acre lots being given to settlers at that time.

- Effective control cannot be pinned down to one single factor and is the result of a combination of measures and events occurring no earlier than 1845 and no later than the 1860s. The two main factors are:

1. The obligation of Métis to become landowners, a measure brought about by the end of First Nation title and squatting along Georgian Bay as well as the arrival of other settlers on the surrounding lands.

2. The Crown selling timber rights to companies and thus fostering an extensive lumber industry. This industry had an effect on traditional harvesting practices, notably fishing, on Georgian Bay. Also, the Crown imposed an obligation to obtain fishing licenses as early as 1857. As we’ve seen in the historical records, in Georgian Bay, the Métis continued to harvest without licenses and were mentioned on several occasions as illegal fishers.
1. Notes on the research and sources

In the course of this research, we’ve noted that, although the vast majority of local historical publications dealing with the Penetanguishene area make at least a passing reference to the voyageurs/Métis/French-Canadian community established in Southern Georgian Bay as a result of the move of the British garrison from Drummond Island in 1828, our 1989 published thesis (Les Voyageurs et la colonisation de Penetanguishene 1825-1871), and the 2000 Praxis Research Associates report, Historic métis in Ontario: Georgian Bay, both limited to the period from 1800 to 1900, remain the only detailed studies of this community.

Even the body of research conducted on the Métis in general and the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes in particular, contain precious few direct references to the historic Métis population in the Penetanguishene area. This may be explained by a number of factors, the first being that widespread interest in the Upper Great Lakes Métis is recent, dating back to the 1980s, for instance the 1981 Newberry Library conference of scholars in Chicago. As well, the Métis population in the Penetanguishene area (initially, approximately 300 people) represented but a small portion of that found in other areas of the Upper Great Lakes in the late 1820s. It has been estimated that at that time about 15,000 Métis lived in the Great Lakes region (Jung, 1997).

Penetanguishene, at the south end of Georgian Bay was not located on the main strategic fur and travel routes of the period which explains to some extent why it gets little attention in most research papers dealing with the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes. Finally, many of the scholars that have shown interest in this field are affiliated with institutions located on the American side of the Great Lakes (Michigan, Wisconsin...) or in the Canadian Prairies and thus have concentrated their research in their immediate geographic area. As Reimer and Chartrand of Praxis Research Associates have noted:

Although a large body of literature exists on the Métis Nation in the western provinces, there are no published case studies of historic Métis communities in the province of Ontario. A review of the literature reveals agreement among historians that a mixed European/Aboriginal population grew out of the fur trade around the Great Lakes, and that descendants of this population formed the recognizable ethnic and political group of Métis that developed at Red River (Brown 1987; Foster 1995; Giraud 1986 [1945]; Gorham 1987; Morrison 1996; Peterson 1978, 1981, 1985; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996). However, beyond such references to the Great Lakes mixed population, detailed published accounts of the formation and ethnogenesis of Métis communities in Ontario are lacking (Reimer, 2004: 568).

As well, Métis historian Patsy Lou Wilson McArthur rightly points out that:

Known federal and provincial government papers, and published academic works, contain little mention of the Lake Huron and Georgian Bay fur trade. Further, provincial archives and local libraries relate few Metis family histories among countless community projects generated since the mid-twentieth century. [...] On the other hand, Metis people share responsibility as well by failing to leave a clear Metis record. In the past, it was difficult for Metis to write and publish owing to language, discrimination and marginalization. At times it was even dangerous, as powerful governments belligerently denied Metis
their rights and identity as a people. Most Ontario Metis families were forced to hide their origins, especially during the Metis Resistance. Now visibly proud of their heritage and in a new era, Metis realize that a people’s interpretation of its own history is paramount, and works written and published by Metis are becoming more common (McArthur, 2005: v).

This “missing history” was also mentioned during the landmark Powley trial where Dr. Arthur Ray testified that:

Metis people tend to be invisible or unidentifiable in official records and in other primary sources upon which historians rely to construct the history of Aboriginal groups in Canada [...] There are almost no data on Métis in Ontario for the period 1900-1970 (see Payment 2001: 675). As indicated in the Powley case, a situation of discrimination and prejudice resulted in an invisible, but not absent, Métis population (Powley 2001: para.35). It is apparent that systematic and comprehensive oral history research is required to fill that gap — a task that remains in the realm of future research (Reimer, 2004: 598-599).

It should also be noted that the primary sources for the period are often written accounts by people who speak of the Métis but come from very different and sometimes foreign backgrounds. They naturally denote the perceptions and points of view of the writer. Often, in these primary source documents, the Métis are referred to collectively as “the half-breeds” or “the Canadians” and more rarely on an individual basis. This makes it difficult to pinpoint the activities of individuals within the Métis community.

Lastly, these primary sources written by English speakers often corrupt the French names. Even in contemporary transcriptions of historical records (for instance the transcription of the 1911 Census) the corruption of French names is still common place. This again adds an extra difficulty in identifying the Métis in source documents.

The Praxis report, with regard to the Métis families it identified in the Penetanguishene area in the 1901 census, rightly concluded that:

Unfortunately there is next to no written evidence about what happened to these métis families in subsequent generations, a gap which only genealogical and oral historical research would begin to fill (Praxis, 2000: 111).

We should also add that it is crucial that this research be carried out in the very near future, and encompass the larger Georgian Bay area and in particular the communities along its eastern shore, since those individuals who can supply this critical oral history are rapidly disappearing and with them the knowledge these living libraries contain.

To facilitate further genealogical research and self-identification of Métis descendants it is also imperative that a list of positive Métis ancestors (from the 1820s) be established and made available to researchers.
Map 1: Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Mackinac Straits area
2. The ethnogenesis of the Penetanguishene area Métis community

2.1 Initial contact between Europeans and First Nations people in Huronia (Southern Georgian Bay)

Although the area encompassing Penetanguishene was occupied by First Nations in the 17th century, and that these peoples came into contact with Europeans, the existence of identifiable Métis resulting from this contact cannot be demonstrated and has no direct bearing on the origins of the Métis community that was to establish itself later in the area.

The first European to arrive in the area, Étienne Brûlé, came to live among the Wendat or Huron people in 1610. He was later followed by Récollet missionnaries and Samuel de Champlain in 1615. The French later established the Jesuit mission of Sainte-Marie from 1639 to 1649 which, at its peak, had nearly 100 European occupants representing close to a fifth of the White population of New France. War and disease led to the dispersal of the Wendat and the decision by the French to abandon the area in 1650.

The Praxis report concludes that:

While no statistical formula can be used to generate an estimate of the number of children born in Huronia from mixed descent, it seems unlikely that overall more than 200 such children would have been born between 1615 and 1650, and most of these were likely born prior to 1634 (Praxis, 2000: 42).

It is impossible to know the number of children that would have had French fathers at the time, but it is probable that these children would have remained in their First Nation families to be raised by their First Nation mothers. Therefore, there is no evident link to be found between the Upper Great Lakes Métis and the mixed race children born during this period of initial contact.

2.2 Ethnogenesis of the Upper Great Lakes Métis

2.2.1 Birth of the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes

The origins of the Penetanguishene Métis community can be traced back to the birth of the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes in general. This dates back to the early fur trade and the influx of Europeans into the area in the late 1600s. Generally, much has been written about the fur trade and the people who participated in it. A number of the men of European background engaged in this trade came to father mixed race children initially with First Nation women and later with both First Nation and Métis women. Later, the relationships between Métis men and First Nation or Métis women would also result in offspring.

These early workers of the fur trade adapted to life in the Upper Great Lakes and, through prolonged residency in the country, developed relationships with the First Nations people. Marrying First Nation women was instrumental for the success of these men in the fur trade. These women aided the voyageurs to establish links with First Nation families. They also helped them learn First Nation languages and culture and looked after many domestic tasks crucial to their survival like making moccasins or snowshoes (Marchand, 1989: 21).

Voyageurs, French-Canadian and later Scottish or British and other, would often travel to the Upper Great Lakes for a temporary stay or contract but, after entering into a relationship with a First Nation woman and fathering children, it would become more difficult for them to return to Lower Canada (Québec) (Jung, 1987).
Frenchmen married First Nation women for two principal reasons: the fact that the latter were available (since the only French women who went west of Montreal were army officers’ wives) and economic reasons for their help in the fur trade. On the other hand, First Nation women would choose French partners for a variety of reasons. These included: family wishes, conversion to catholicism, skewed sex ratios due to the large number of men killed in intertribal warfare, sexual gratification, and material gain (Jung, 1987).

There were two types of marriages practiced in the Upper Great Lakes area between Europeans and First Nation or Métis women, or later between Métis men and First Nation or Métis women: country marriages and church marriages. The latter case was rarer even if:

Most Frenchmen were committed to the idea of having marriages that they considered to be valid by their own customs, and those who could afford to make the trip to a local priest generally had their marriages consecrated within the church. However, they could only receive clerical sanction if they married Indian women who had converted to Catholicism and received the sacraments. This and the continual shortage of clergy in the upper country made this type of marriage uncommon (Jung, 1987).

The mutual consent marriage, the basis for what became known as à la façon du pays, or “the custom of the country” marriage, was by far the predominant type of marriage practiced at that time. Jung describes these marriages that: “were made by the mutual consent of both partners (from French-Canadian customs), and [...] could be dissolved anytime by the agreement of both partners (from Indian custom)” (Jung, 1987).

The marriages, although unofficial, were not entered into lightly as illustrated by Amable Dupras, an engagé with the North West Company, who states:

“We [the voyageurs] regard this union as a union between husband and wife ... and as a sacred union” (ORN* 33). Elizabeth Mason states that period documents prove that the bonds between First Nation women and Whites are more than superficial since the ties between families will last for several decades (ORN 34: Marchand, 1989: 22). (Our translation)

Original French:
Amable Dupras, un engagé de la compagnie du Nord-Ouest, témoigne à ce sujet : “nous [les voyageurs] regardons cette union comme union de mari et femme ... et union sacrée” (33). Elizabeth Mason affirme que les documents d’époque prouvent que les liens entre les Amérindiennes et les Blancs dépassent le superficiel puisque les liens entre les familles dureront plusieurs décennies (34).

An example of the seriousness of such marriages is the marriage contract between William Simpson and Lisette Larche on October 26, 1814 at Michilimackinac (Mackinac Island)**. This two

* Original reference notes contained in a quote are here-in indicated by the abbreviation ORN with the number given in the source.

** The spelling of Michilimackinac varies in various texts, sometimes with one “l” and sometimes with two. When not quoting a document, we have opted to use the contemporary spelling of the name, that is, with one “l”. Also, after the community moved to Mackinac Island, in 1780, it was still referred to in some sources as Michilimackinac. We have added Mackinac Island in the case where the use of Michilimackinac refers to the settlement on Mackinac Island as opposed to the community that existed prior to this on the mainland.
page contract, written in French, lays out the conditions of the marriage including the rights of the two partners, notably Lisette Larche to her husband’s possessions and property in case of death (Simpson, PAO, Genealogical Papers). After the death of his first wife soon after the marriage, Simpson would later move to Penetanguishene in 1828 and then marry another Métis woman, Catherine Craddock in 1832.

Nevertheless, not all these marriages were permanent and separations did occur. For many fur trade employees, or later British military personnel, bringing their country marriage wives to Lower Canada was not an option either because of social stigma attached to this, or because they considered that First Nation women would be unable to adapt to life in Lower Canada. Therefore, the abandoned First Nation women either returned to their tribe or were placed in the care of another voyageur, a custom known as “turning off” (ORN 31: Marchand, 1989: 21-22).

Abandoned Métis and First Nations women kept their children from their country marriages. The First Nation women could return to their tribes, where their extended family would help rear the children. First Nations societies in the Great Lakes did not use race as the basis for inclusion or exclusion from their group. Whereas Métis women who did not have immediate family within a First Nation’s tribe couldn’t depend on the same security of a safety net. Abandoned Métis women generally had to marry another Frenchman or Métis man to provide for themselves or their children. Available evidence indicates that First Nation women usually did not return to their tribes but would, like the Métis women, remarry another French or Métis man (Jung, 1987).

Indian affairs agent, Captain T. G. Anderson, notes that on Drummond Island in 1817, there are a number of children of abandoned women.

The first class of children I allude (sic) to were those of the officers at different times stationed in this vicinity. These poor orphans, many of which perhaps never saw their Fathers, and are left totally unprovided for with their unfortunate mothers to be brought up in all the torture of want and vice possible to immagine (sic) (Anderson, PAC, 1817).

The Hudson’s Bay Company formally banned its employees from entering into country marriages. Although the North West Company seems to have been more tolerant of its employees marrying First Nation women, in 1806, it did issue a ban on such marriages (this ban did not include Métis women). However, such policies seem to have had little effect since the vast majority of those voyageurs who eventually moved to Penetanguishene had First Nation or Métis country marriage spouses (ORN 36: Marchand, 1989: 23).

Studies of church records by Jacqueline Peterson at Michilimackinac show that:

Between 1698 and 1765, sixty-two marriages were recorded at Michilimackinac and an additional twenty-five can be inferred from the baptismal register. Of these, twenty-nine, or roughly one-third, were contracted between French-Canadians and only three between Indian men and women. By far the largest number of marriages (forty-eight percent) joined Canadian employees of the fur trade to Indian or métis women. In the French period, métis endogamy and marriage between métis and Indian appear insignificant (Peterson, 1985, art. Many Roads: 48).

In the late 1700s and early 1800s as the number of these country marriages rose, so did the number of Métis offspring.
Between 1765 and about 1830, the majority of children born in Great Lakes fur-trading towns were Métis born either of French-Indian marriages, Métis-Indian marriages, or Métis-Métis marriages (Jung, 1987).

Jacqueline Peterson’s analysis of the Mackinac baptismal register between 1689 and 1797, as presented in Dr. Patrick Jung’s article, indicates the important number of Métis births. One notes, in the table that follows, the increase in percentage of the Métis births in the late 1700s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>1689-1765</th>
<th>1765-1797</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Métis</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>38.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-American</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>32.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jung, 1987)

By the late 1700s, a large number of mixed-ancestry offspring established themselves in the larger fur trade communities of the Upper Great Lakes. As a result, there emerged distinctive Métis communities (Sleeper-Smith, 2001: 52). Some historians have argued that:

The main difficulty in attempting to document the development of a métis population in the 18th century is that persons living in frontier regions of the colony were differentiated more on the basis of lifestyle, including occupation and socio-economic class, than by race or racial origins (Harrington 1981:35-36). Whiteside and Whiteside (1979:1-3) remark that no systematic distinctions were made in government records between ‘full-blood’ and ‘half-breed’ Indians until the 1830s, when questions of legal status and potential rights of persons of mixed European and Indian descent began to surface as administrative issues (Praxis, 2000: 58).

Others, such as Jacqueline Peterson, believe that race identification occurred earlier.

Whereas eighteenth-century observers had been apt to refer to members of Great Lakes fur-trade settlements as “Canadien,” “French”, or “Indian,” depending upon cultural attributes such as dress, demeanour or social rank, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, this cultural classification system was being challenged and supplanted by a system based upon pseudoscientific ideas about race. Following the War of 1812, terms such as half-breed, métis and métif began to appear with increasingly (sic) frequency in the travel literature, carrying with them the pejorative baggage of social inferiority or degeneracy (Peterson, 1985 art. Many Roads: 39).

One of the defining features of the emerging Métis society in the Upper Great Lakes is without question the role the Métis carved out for themselves in the fur trade. Many Métis were employed in occupations oriented towards the fur trade. With time: “voyageurs increasingly were recruited from the Métis settlements of the Great Lakes region” (Jung, 1987). They were employed
in different occupations and acted as cultural intermediaries between First Nation people and Europeans.

Over time, some persons of mixed descent came to live in the colony as small businessmen, clerks, and even farmers, while others gained employment as *coureurs de bois*, *voyageurs*, and traders; others still, attached to Indian bands, became their spokesmen, leaders and in some cases even chiefs (DIAND 1980:6). The occupational tendency of persons of mixed descent towards roles that involved cultural brokerage between Indians and Europeans led to their gradual classification as (sic) distinct social group by the 19th century (Praxis, 2000: 58-59).

Thus, their position in the fur trade, as Peterson points out, became part of the Métis identity.

One of the primary reasons that Great Lakes Métis were able to construct a separate identity was their monopolization of the middle occupational rungs of the fur trading system. [...] Aggressively seizing a position of influence at Michilimackinac, Sault Ste. Marie, Green Bay, Prairie du Chien and elsewhere, they and their Métis children carved out a broker relationship between Central Algonkian and Siouan bands to the northwest and European society to the east, functioning primarily as traders, voyageurs and clerks who journeyed to and lived among their native middletown clients (Peterson, 1984).

In her research on the Métis, Peterson looks at how the Métis identity evolved in relation to the territory they lived in.

In considering the St. Lawrence tradition it remains to be determined whether the distinctions between the métis of the Upper Great Lakes and the Northern Plains were such that the two should be considered separate social groups. Peterson has demonstrated how the tangled lineages which characterized the métis of the Upper Great Lakes after three or four generations caused "Métis identity [...] become regionalized rather than place-specific. (ORN 22) [...]"

Historians cannot ignore the possibility of further subdivisions within the métis populations. Some of these subdivisions would reflect the effect of events after métis populations were in existence as particular communities. What were the ramifications for the Great Lakes métis of the signing of Jay's Treaty in 1794? With this agreement the de facto British militias and commercial presence in the American Old Northwest came to an end. Historians have seen the treaty as radically restructuring the Montreal fur trade, and particularly its hinterland (ORN 25). Grand Portage and Sault Ste. Marie became part of a trading System that linked the Canadian Northwest with Montréal, and their traders supposedly lost interest in the region to the south. As a result, did their métis populations come to see themselves as separate from their kindred to the south? (Peterson, 1985: 77-78)
Peterson’s work also points to the development of a Métis identity that coincides with the moment that their focus shifts from Montreal to the Upper Great Lakes, which distinguishes them from the “Canadiens” (Peterson, 1985: 81). This distinctiveness sets the Métis apart from the French-Canadians and other people of European background but also apart from the First Nations people. As the reviewer of an historical work on the Métis published in 1948 noted:

The Métis will always refuse to be assimilated into Indian society at every period of their existence. The ease with which they again take up civilized customs upon the arrival of missionaries illustrates that, although they may not have retained all of the habits integral to it, they still had a consciousness of, and the taste for living in the state of a society with which they still felt close ties. (From a book review of “Le Métis Canadien” in Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française, Vol. I, 1948, p. 146, quoted in Gobeil, 1956: 168).

Original French:
Les Métis refuseront toujours d’être assimilés aux Sauvages, à quelqu’époque de leur existence. La faculté avec laquelle ils reviennent aux habitudes civilisées, à l’arrivée des missionnaires démontre qu’ils avaient encore conscience, le goût, sinon les habitudes intégrales de l’état de société, dont ils restaient assez rapprochés.

Peterson describes this distinctiveness in these terms:

These people were neither adjunct relative-members of tribal villages nor the standard bearers of European civilization in the wilderness. Increasingly, they stood apart or, more precisely, in between. By the end of the last struggle for empire in 1815, their towns, which were visually, ethnically and culturally distinct from neighbouring Indian villages and “white towns” along the eastern seabord, stretched from Detroit and Michilimackinac at the east to the Red River at the northwest (Peterson, 1985, art. Many Roads: 41).

According to Payment:

Most scholars agree that by the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, European and Indian outsiders were ascribing a separate identity to Métis (Payment 2001: 675-6) (Reimer, 2004: 571).

And with this separate identity evolved the use of the term half-breed.

The term Halfbreed was first used by North West Company (NWC) Canadians, who apparently recognized mixed bloods as members of a distinct social and racial category in the first decades of the 1800s. According to Gorham it was not until the 1820s that a few scattered references to Halfbreeds began to appear in the writings of Catholic missionaries. In 1823 Father Gabriel Richard wrote that at St. Joseph, Prairie du Chien, and Mackinac “there are more than 60-80 Canadian Catholic families, or Halfbreeds who nearly all speak the language of the Indians with whom they are joined in marriage” (in Gorham 1987: 40-41). (Reimer, 2004: 572)

The historical existence of a Métis community in the Penetanguishene area dating back to at least the 1820s is quite evident and supported by many documents, both primary and secondary
sources. As noted in the Praxis study, which focussed on the Parry Sound, Owen Sound and Penetanguishene areas: “Penetanguishene appears to be the only locale at which any significant number of persons of mixed Indian and European ancestry may havesettled in the early 19th century” (Praxis, 2000: 61).

This conclusion however begs the question, how many Métis are required to form a significant number and does this number take into account the traditional Métis lifestyle of living in smaller, more isolated communities that maintain kinship and other links between themselves?

Thus, the origins of the Georgian Bay and Penetanguishene Métis communities are closely linked to the origins of the Métis Upper Great Lakes, in particular the Michilimackinac, Mackinac Island and Sault Ste. Marie area. Before its establishment in Penetanguishene, it underwent four phases:

A. Michilimackinac (1720-1780); and Mackinac Island (1780-1796)
B. St. Joseph Island (between 1796 and 1812)
C. Mackinac Island (1812-1815)
D. Drummond Island 1815-1828
(See Map 2 on p. 11)

The “Great Lakes métis settlements between 1763 and 1830” map includes the villages of: St. Joseph’s Island, Drummond Island, Mackinac Island and Michilimackinac (Peterson, 1985, art. Many Roads: 44). These villages correspond to the villages settled by the ancestors of the Penetanguishene area Métis.

Jung notes that there are basically three types of Métis settlements in the Great Lakes, notably the Commercial-Military Center which he describes thus:

The two most important sites in the Great Lakes region were Detroit and Mackinac Island. These were at strategic locations where the French and later the British and Americans established military posts. These military posts meant that the local affairs tended to be regulated to a large degree by far-away colonial governments. The military also meant that the economy was more diversified, for while many people at Detroit and Mackinac Island engaged in the fur trade, some Métis settlers instead grew food to sell to the garrisons or to fur traders. These were some of the largest of the Métis settlements and had over one thousand persons (including the military) (Jung, 1987).

Drummond Island, and later Penetanguishene in its early development fall under the commercial-military centre heading as described above.
Map 2: Mackinac Straits and surrounding area
People describing the Métis settlements will later remark on their particular architecture or layout. The descriptions resemble some of the typical characteristics of Métis communities as noted by Peterson.

The physical layout of Métis villages was vaguely reminiscent of earlier French string settlements fronting the St. Lawrence, settlements which themselves had been adaptations to a fur trading economy rather than replications of European agricultural village patterns. Lacking a core, rectangular grid structure, and in many cases verifiable land titles, Métis towns rambled along the shoreline of inland rivers and lakes, seemingly without design.

The apparent disorder and backwardness of these settlements shocked outside observers. William Keating dismissed the small, upright log, barkcovered cabins with their high-peaked roofs and mud and thatch fireplaces as mere “rude huts” (ORN14). Such houses leaned into the primary highway, the waterroad, where they often tumbled after years of decay. Behind them, narrow, picketed gardens trailed off into the timber, protecting tiny patches of peas, potatoes and garlic from the unfettered meanderings of horses, hogs and horned cattle. Agriculture, such as it was, was confined to a modest-sized common field. At Green Bay, only two square miles had been set aside (ORN 15: Peterson, 1984).

The communities created by the people in the Great Lakes were the result of their high level of mobility as exemplified in this example given by Lucy Elsdersveld Murphy involving an offshoot of the Langlade family.

When Indians attacked Michilimackinac and threatened La Baye in 1763, the British army abandoned Wisconsin (ORN 9). Perhaps for this very reason, during the next several decades more French Canadians from Mackinac and Montreal moved into these two towns [in Wisconsin].

Families that had divided their time between Mackinac and Green Bay now established their primary residences in the latter settlement. One such family, the Langlades, included a prominent Odawa woman named La Blanche who moved to Green Bay with her husband, French Canadian trader Augustin de Langlade; their son, the trader and military leader Charles; and daughter-in-law Charlotte Bourassa, bringing with them several children, cousins, and slaves. About 1763 they joined four other families already residing at Green Bay (ORN10). This move probably was the greatest change for the women and young children, who were less frequent travelers than the men (Murphy, 2000: 47).

2.2.2 Michilimackinac (prior to 1780)

The straits of Mackinac, located in what is now Northern Michigan were considered in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries as a strategic economic location. About 13 km across, and at the confluence of three Great Lakes (Superior, Huron and Michigan), it has several islands, a few of which are quite large, like St. Joseph (the second largest fresh-water island in the world) and
Drummond Island. These stand in the middle of the Saint-Marys river that flows from Lake Superior past Sault Ste. Marie into the Straits. Controlling this transition point between Lake Huron and the northern fur country in Lake Superior and beyond, as well as the trade flowing from Lake Michigan and the south was key to the economy.

Both the strait and the island lying just 11 km to the west of it are called Mackinac, a name derived from the Ojibway word Me-zhe-ka, for turtle (Marchand, 1989: 27).

The presence of French missionaries began as early as the 1670s with a mission, St. Ignace, founded in 1671. The mission was located on Mackinac Island and then, moved to the mainland just north of Michilimackinac, on the northern side of the Straits. The military soon followed the missionaries, with Fort Buade being established in 1690. This was a small fortified trading post. In 1715, the French established a fort at Michilimackinac on the south side of the Straits. This town flourished and by 1722 thirty French families, of soldiers and officers, lived in the fort and thirty traders’ families were established outside (Havighurst, 1966: 49).

As we ascertained in our previous work, Michilimackinac is the cradle of the Penetanguishene voyageurs.

In this strategic location, many voyageurs families will establish themselves giving birth to a genuine family network made up of different family alliances between various families and traders. Michilimackinac will become the core of this network. Around the middle of the 19th century, several leaders are Métis who have the advantage of understanding both North-American and European cultures. Charles Langlade is one of them (Marchand, 1989: 30). (Our translation)

Original French:
À cet endroit stratégique, plusieurs familles de voyageurs s'établiront et donneront naissance à un véritable réseau familial formé de différentes alliances entre familles de traiteurs. Michillimackinac devient le cœur de ce réseau. Vers le milieu du XIXe siècle, plusieurs chefs de file sont des métis qui ont l'avantage de comprendre les cultures nord-américaines et européennes. Charles Langlade est l'un d'eux.

Peterson notes that:

[...] the community at the straits had a stable population from the 1720s onward. Families of many of the householders of 1749, the Langlades, Bertrands, Desrivières, Amelins, Bourassas, Parents, Amiots, Chaboyers, Ainses, Blondeaus and Chevaliers can be traced over several generations (ORN 28). [...] The small explosion of children born of mixed marriages revealed in the register explains why the picket walls at Michilimackinac were enlarged at least three times during the French regime (Peterson, 1985 art. Many Roads: 48-49).

After the Seven Years’ War between France and England, New France, including Michilimackinac, became British. The British took control of the fort in 1761. They were, two years later driven out of the fort by the First Nations who rose up against them. In 1764, the British regained control of the fort. The community around the fort continued to grow. According to a description by John Askin, by 1778, the town: “had grown to impressive size. There were more than 100 houses in the suburbs of the fort, some of them ‘tolerably good’” (ORN 24: Emerson, 1966: 18).

In the latter part of the 18th century, a Métis village has formed there.
The fur trading center at Michilimackinac boasted forty houses in 1749 and twice that number in 1797, exclusive of the settlement at St. Ignace on the north shore of the straits which had been established in the 1690s (Peterson, 1984).

The community, during summer, would have been a bustling hive of activity. Colonial Michilimackinac “was an eighteenth century nexus for the Great Lakes fur trade [...] Hundreds of Odawa, Ojibwa, Métis, and other Great Lakes peoples came to this site every year to trade, visit, and negotiate political agreements” (Peers, 1995: 101).

However, in winter, the village had an altogether different face.

When the thousands departed in the fall for the hunting grounds, Michilimackinac battened down for the winter. Those remaining included the garrison and its female camp followers; families of voyageurs and traders gone for the trading season [...] retired voyageurs and traders with their kin and servants [...] While the population of Michilimackinac varied seasonally, the summer population was composed less of transients and vagabonds than of half-time residents. The majority of Michilimackinac’s inhabitants were forced to migrate in winter in response to the demands of their occupation. By the early 1770s, Michilimackinac had become a relatively complex commercial and military centre whose principal British residents imported most of their goods from the East. A suburb of nearly a hundred houses skirted the stockade. Farming was still a minor activity [...] (Peterson, 1985 art. Many Roads: 47-48 and 51).

Fur trading remained the main economic activity. In 1778, 28 licenses were granted for fur-trading at Michilimackinac (Bayliss, 1938: 17) with one of them going to Jean Baptiste Rousseau (Emerson, 1966: 17). In the early 1780s the Michilimackinac Fur Company is created.

According to Elizabeth Mason, Métis families greatly influenced the development of the fur trade in the south-west and the control of this trade will remain in their hands when, at the end of the eighteenth century, these various families related one way or the other, will unite to found the Michilimackinac company (ORN 13: Marchand, 1989: 30) (Our translation).

Original French:

Ainsi, selon Elizabeth Mason, les familles métisses ont beaucoup influencé le développement du commerce des fourrures dans le sud-ouest et ce contrôle sera toujours entre leurs mains quand, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, ces diverses familles, reliées d’une façon ou d’une autre, s’uniront pour fonder la compagnie Michillimackinac (13).

These families associated with the Michilimackinac Company include the Bertrand, Laframboise, Renaud, Pelletier, Saint-Martin, and of course Langlade (Marchand, 1989: 68). The Métis Langlade family, a branch of which will establish itself at Penetanguishene, was undoubtedly the most prominent in the Upper Great Lakes with members living in various communities all over the region. As Peterson concludes:
By the time Charles Langlade and Claude Gauthier died, just after the turn of
the century, their related dynasties were well entrenched at Green Bay,
Michilimackinac, and Prairie du Chien. Their Métis children and
grandchildren all functioned successfully as traders, traders’ wives,
interpreters, militia and Indian service officers. Moreover, their grandsons
were already renewing the cycle --seeking wider affiliations whose byproduct
inevitably would swell the Métis ranks. [...] Every Métis community had
several such lineages, all of which by 1820 had so entangled themselves
through marital and commercial alliances that Métis identity had become
regionalized rather than place-specific. The expansive engine of the fur trade,
coupled with the French Métis system of wintering out with the tribe, made
such a development certain (Peterson, 1984).

An historic site, built in the late 1960s and called Colonial Michilimackinac, is located in
Mackinac City today. This reproduction of the 18th century village evokes the fort’s appearance
during the 1770s.

2.2.3 Mackinac Island (1780-1796)

However, during the American Revolution, the British military, for strategic reasons,
decided to move the fort to a nearby island, thus creating a second community. The commander of
the fort, Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Sinclair, ordered the move that took place between the fall of
October 1779 and the fall of 1781 (Emerson, 1966: 29). The commander ordered that the Catholic
church of Ste. Anne’s be moved across the ice to Mackinac Island in order to encourage the French
to also move with the fort. Those living close to the fort decided to follow.

During the summer of 1780 the Michilimackinac traders pulled down their
houses, salvaging the doors and windows. The latter were taken to the
island and installed in new dwellings there. [...] In midsummer of 1781 the
King’s 8th Regiment held the last parade at Michilimackinac (Havighurst,

The island, though small (circumference of 13 km), had the advantage of containing a high
promontory where the British located the fort in the hopes that it would be easier to defend in the
event of an attack. At the base of the fort, the village relocated itself.

To change from mainland to island of fortress and garrison was
accompanied by the removal also to the new location of much of the old
community. Michilimackinac pulled itself up by the roots and was
replanted. The old life continued in a new environment, the fur trade,
always the master interest of the community, going on to a larger activity
than anything that the past had recorded. From 1781 there came to Fort
Mackinac the voyageurs, the traders, the Indians and always that fringe of
almost unclassifiable persons who frequented every frontier community
(Landon, 1944: 212-213).

Among the population at Mackinac, there are a number of former employees of the North
West Company and their families. In Governor Simcoe, Michigan and Canadian Defense, the
Mackinac area is described this way in 1791:
Far to the north, the fort on Mackinac Island retained its small garrison. Clustered in the fort area were a few homes and a church for the island’s white residents. A few traders lived at the Sault and along the St. Joseph River, but they added only a few hundred to Michigan’s white population, placing the total at perhaps three thousand (ORN 5: Quoted in Marchand, 1989: 27).

Although there is a catholic church, the same Ste. Anne’s church that existed in Michilimackinac and that was then moved to Mackinac, there is no resident priest. A few documents refer to the religious needs of the French-Canadian voyageurs. In 1786, 25 of the latter sign a request for a priest. In it they mention that they have been deprived of spiritual guidance for the last 11 years. In August 1787, Father Payet visits Mackinac and writes that, in his opinion, there are: “a certain number of devout people despite the multitude of those that are impious” (Têt, 1905: 73). (Our translation).

Original French:
*un certain nombre de dévôts malgré la multitude des impies*

In 1799, another visiting priest, Gabriel Richard, writes that, on Mackinac Island:

> I found a whole slew of children and I baptised 30 of them. They were all over the age of seven and, for the most part illegitimate. It is painful to see so many poor creatures abandoned without religious instruction since there are barely any of them who can make the sign of the cross (Têt, 1905: 74).

Original French:
*J’y trouvai toute une pépinière d’enfants et je supplée les cérémonies du baptême à trente d’entre eux. Ils étaient tous âgés de plus de sept ans, la plupart illégitimes. Il est pénible de constater que tant de pauvres créatures soient abandonnées sans instruction religieuse car c’est à peine s’il s’en trouve qui peuvent faire le signe de la croix.*

During this period, at least a certain number of the voyageurs who have fathered Métis children seem to be struggling with maintaining their religious customs which they never completely abandon despite considerable neglect (Marchand, 1989: 29).

The American Revolution brings a period of uncertainty to North America. With the close of the war, tension between American and Canadian fur traders leads to the signing of the Jay treaty, in November 1794 between the British and American government. Stability returns to the area and Mackinac Island develops further. The same pattern of summer activity followed by winter hibernation continues. In June of 1796, for instance, there were 800 persons at Mackinac who assembled there, beside First Nation people of various tribes, for the rendezvous (Vincent, 1978: 67).

> In 1797, Mackinac had some seventy-nine log-and-bark houses, two stores and a Catholic church hugging the southern shore of the island which looked out across the narrows to the hardwood groves of Bois Blanc Island (ORN 36: Peterson, 1985 art. Many Roads: 51).

The fur merchants at this point are largely able to ignore the new border between Canada and the newly created United States. They continue to carry on their trade (Vincent, 1978: 55). But, when the treaty becomes official, in February 1796, the American military take over Mackinac
Island and its fort. The British garrison is forced to remove from American territory. It establishes itself on St. Joseph Island near Sault Ste. Marie, approximately 60 km to the northeast of Mackinac Island.

### 2.2.4 St. Joseph Island (1796-1812)

The British set about building a small fort on St. Joseph Island. Their intention is to create a fur trading post on the Canadian side of the border that will attract both the traders and the First Nation people. Some of the traders from Mackinac ask for lots to build on St. Joseph Island and some move to the island after 1796 or build stone storehouses there to supplement their establishments at Mackinac. Border issues were becoming a concern for the fur trade. Therefore, for some, moving to St. Joseph Island is a way to keep their options open on both sides of the border (Vincent, 1978: 125). For others, the move is a way to avoid the taxes levied by the American government (Bayliss, 1938: 43).

The North West Company set up a post and warehouse on the Island. Although St. Joseph Island would never rival Mackinac as a centre of trade, a small settlement grew up around the fort. As early as by the fall of 1797, two traders, Charles Langlade and Culberston had built residences on the island (Vincent, 1978: 93). In 1797, Charles Langlade jr. was named interpreter at St. Joseph Island (Vincent, 1978: 106). By the following summer, Captain Lamothe, Thomas Duggan, Charles Langlade, Mr. Birkett and Mr. Chauvin were building near the fort. There were also others, David Mitchell, Jean Baptiste Pothier, Monsieur Chiset, and Monsieur Frerot preparing to build. By 1804, the village around the fort was well established (Vincent, 1978: 95).

Not only the fort but the community about it grew and flourished. [...] It was much more than a fort, it was a total community. [...] It included the military (sic), the traders, government agents, Indians and the constant flow of transients (Emerson, 1966: 30-31).

Over the course of the following decade, the palisaded fort containing some seven to eight buildings, and the village seem to blend into one.

By May 12, 1811, problems of cultivation had reached such a state that the distinction between military and non-military ground was a matter of confusion. Captain [Charles] Roberts, the Commandant, complained to the Military Secretary that the settlers were a problem “there being so many small patches taken up by private individuals and these patches so divided and intermixed with ground in military use” (ORN 128: Emerson, 1966: 148).

During the period of military activity on the island, several Métis people, besides the Langlade’s, who will later come to reside in Penetanguishene are mentioned. There is the exemple of Prisque Legris, who in 1810: “was paid £22 10s for building and completing a blacksmith shop at Fort St. Joseph, presumably to replace an old one.” (Vincent, 1978: 115).

The Mitchell family, Elizabeth Bertrand, a Chippewa First Nation business woman and her British husband, Dr. David Mitchell, as well as their Métis son and two daughters were also among the residents of St. Joseph Island. Also, the Métis son of Lieutenant John Craddock was born there.

Although it is hard to establish the actual numbers of the civilian population on the Island during this period, evidence points to a number of families living there. One incident, in the
winter of 1811, regarding the production of coats for the soldiers, shows that there were a number of women present in the community.

John Askin, Keeper of the King’s Stores, was given the task of producing the coats. He gave assurance that he would produce forty great coats [...] within a fortnight.

Askin must have set up a temporary tailor shop, for he had “eight or ten white and half-breed women” fashion the blankets into great coats (ORN 130: Emerson, 1966: 149).

As with the garrison towns around Michilimackinac and the fort on Mackinac Island, it is safe to say that the population fluctuated considerably between summer and winter. The fort and village of St. Joseph Island would prove to be short-lived. The War of 1812 would reshape the border once again. The outbreak of the conflict between Canada and the United States, although brewing for some time, came suddenly.

On July 15, 1812, the commander of Fort St. Joseph, Charles Roberts, upon receiving notice of the outbreak of war, decided that his best defence was an offence. Thus, the British moved to take back Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island.

Roberts received the letter on the 15th [of July], and the next day set out for the attack with a motley little force of 400 Indians, 180 French-Canadians, and 45 men of the 10th Royal Veterans, which was his own corps (Wood, 1968, vol. I: p. 24).

Some Métis of the St. Joseph Island and Sault Ste. Marie area took part in the capture of Fort Mackinac from the Americans, a number of them signing up as members of the Michigan Fencibles, a locally raised unit of volunteers consisting mainly of fur trade employees (Vincent, 1978: 195).

With Captain Roberts were 47 redcoats [...] There were, besides 180 volunteers — mainly Canadian — engagees, and others gathered from Fort William, Sault Ste. Marie, and other Nor’Wester establishments. No fewer than 400 Indians, the largest component, were ready to fall upon the enemy. All told, the British forces numbered about 630 men (Gough, 2002: 22).

Captain Charles Robert mentions that the voyageurs/Métis who participated in this expedition played a key role in its success, for it was they who manned the boats that transported the troops and who also managed to put the decisive artillery in place. In a letter written to Baynes, from the Fort on Mackinac Island on July 17, 1812, Roberts described the operation and the role of the Métis/voyageurs thus:

On the sixteenth at Ten Oclock in the morning I embarked my few men with about one hundred and eighty Canadian Engagees half of them without Arms about three hundred Indians, and two Iron six pounders, the boats arrived without the smallest accident at the place of Rendevouz (sic) at three oClock the following morning (sic)—by the exertions of the Canadians one of the Guns was brought up to a height commanding the Garrison and ready to act about Ten Oclock [...] The greatest praize (sic) is due to every Individual

In another letter to General Brock the same day, he again mentions the role of the volunteers.

I embarked on the morning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} with Two of the Six pounders and every man I could muster, and at Ten o’clock, the Signal being made, we were immediately under weigh.

By the most unparalleled exertions of the Canadians who manned the Boats we arrived at the place of the rendezvous at 3 o’clock the following morning.

One of these unwieldy Guns was brought up with much difficulty to the Heights above the Fort and in readiness to open about Ten o’clock [...] (Wood, 1968, vol. I: 433-434).

Today, on Mackinac Island, a State park, a place known as British Landing marks the spot where the expedition landed. A paved trail leads up to the height of land, now known as Fort Holmes, where the Métis and voyageurs volunteers would have dragged the canon, no doubt having to hack at least part of their way through bush.

On the morning of July 17, the Americans deeming their position hopeless against the artillery levelled against them, and fearing a massacre of the civilian population, surrendered. John Askin, in a letter written on the 18\textsuperscript{th}, noted that:

Mr. Crawford had the Command of the Canadians which Consisted of about 200 men. [...] My Son, Charles Langlade, Augustine Nolin & Michelle Cadotte Junr. have rendered me great Services in keeping the Indians in order, & executing from time to time such Commands as were delivered to me by the Commanding Officer (Wood, 1968, vol. I: 436-437).

A few days after the surrender of the fort, more voyageurs arrived from Fort William, and on July 29, Roberts wrote that:

Eighteen Canadians have taken the oath of Allegiance and after much solicitation, volunteered to serve for a limited period, these with two old men discharged from the late Canadian Volunteers, formed a part of the American Garrison here (Wood, 1968, vol. I: 438).

At the end of the summer, for the most part the Métis and voyageurs left for winter hunting grounds. As historian Fred Landon comments:

Roberts must have been sorry to see his Canadian voyageurs leave. They may have been difficult to control but they were stout, resolute fellows who could be counted upon when there was hard work ahead, much more so than the poor old drunken veterans of his own command. With his blue capot, his gaudy sash, his deerskin leggings and his gay beaded pouch, the voyageur was a figure long to be remembered. Joseph McGillivray has left us a lively picture of the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs which came into existence in the fall of 1812, just such fellows as were under Roberts for a short time.
“It was quite impossible to make them amenable to military law,” he wrote. “They generally came on parade with a pipe in their mouths and their rations of pork and bread stuck on their bayonet. On seeing an officer, whether general, colonel, or subaltern, they took off their hats and made a low bow, with the common salutation of ‘Bonjour, Monsieur le Général’ or ‘le Colonel,’ as the case might be, and, if they happened to know that the officer was married they never failed to inquire after the health of ‘Madame et les enfants.’ On parade they talked incessantly, called each other ‘pork eater,’ quarreled (sic) about their rations, wished they were back in the Indian country again, &c., and when called to order by their officers and told to hold their tongues one or more would reply, ‘Ah, dear captain, let us off as quick as you can; some of us have not yet breakfasted, and it’s upwards of an hour since I had a smoke.’... In vain the subaltern winked, in vain the captain threatened, in vain the colonel frowned; neither winks, threats, or frowns, could restrain the vivacious laugh, silence the noisy tongue, or compose the ever changing features into any thing like military seriousness (ORN 6: Grace Lee Nute, The Voyageur, New York, 1931, 164-165 in Landon, 1944: 81).

The volunteers of the Michigan Fencibles also participated in the taking of Prairie du Chien, at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers, from the Americans in July 1813. The force, commanded by William McKay, arrived at Prairie du Chien on the 17th, and was about 650 strong, including First Nations men, and 120 Michigan Fencibles (Vincent, 1978: 200 and Wood, 1968, vol. II: p. 257). Prairie du Chien was taken with only three wounded on the British side.

The force proved victorious and McKay stated that every man of the Michigan Fencibles, Canadian volunteers and the officers of the Indian Department had behaved extremely well under hot fire. “The Michigan Fencibles who manned the Gun behaved with great courage, coolness and regularity” (Vincent, 1978: 206).

The following year, the Americans would try to take back Mackinac. Beforehand, in July 1814, they landed on St. Joseph Island and burned the fort and the stores of the North West Company. They left those of the Southwest Company and civilian property intact (Emerson, 1966: 185).

The force then attempted to launch its guns from the water against the fort on Mackinac Island without success owing to the fort’s elevation. On August 14th, the Americans tried to take the fort in the same way the British and their volunteers had, by landing on the other side of the island and moving canon to the height above the fort. However, the British, the volunteers and their First Nation allies engaged them before they could reach it and repelled them (Wood, 1968, vol. I: 113).

This would prove to be the last engagement in the Upper Great Lakes. Several of the “Canadian volunteers” and their families would later move to Drummond Island and then Penetanguishene, and some of them would later petition the government to recognize their military service during the War of 1812. If the Métis and the French-Canadian
voyageurs chose to fight on the British side it was to defend their interests since the fur-trade economy was being threatened by the border issues between Canada and the United States.

When the Metis militantly asserted themselves before 1800, historians assumed it was as allies of the French, or the English, or the Indians, in the context of a larger struggle between competing European, Indian, and colonial powers.

From a Metis perspective these battles were fought by Metis to assert their rights and defend their own territory against any and all comers (Dunn: 1988).

The exact number and identity of the Métis that participated in the Michigan Fencibles and the military actions in the Upper Great Lakes by the British forces during the War of 1812 is difficult to ascertain. However, there are a few indications that allow us to confirm who some of them were.

In 1825, in a letter to the Governor of Upper Canada Province, Sir Peregrine Maitland, William McKay, late Lieutenant Colonel of the Michigan Fencibles, petitioned for compensation on behalf of his former troops which would have included Métis.

That the Michigan Fencibles during the whole of the late war served on the frontier and were in many actions, to wit Michilimacinac, Rock River and at the reduction of Prairie des Chiens etc... […] That the individuals of the said Corps depend upon your petitioner praying that lands be granted to them.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Excellency will be pleased in such manner as your wisdom may direct order that lands may be granted to the Michigan Fencibles either in the River St. Clair or on the Island of St. Joseph, to such individuals of the said Michigan Fencibles as may apply for the same, according to their respective rank (Mackay, PAC, April 1825).

A few months later, Mackay submitted another request in favour of the Michigan Fencibles to Major Hiller at York. Writing from Drummond Island, Mackay acknowledged that his claims should have been presented sooner but then stated that:

My reason for not bringing forward the claims of that Corps at an earlier period is this. I trusted that the duties it had performed during the late American War would in the common (routine / motive?) of Government providing for her servants have entitled it to Notice, but as complaints were made to me by many of those who had served in the Corps, of their having obtained no remuneration for their services, I consider it my duty to lay their claims with submission before His Excellency the Lieut. Governor […] (Mackay, PAC, July 1825).

With this last letter, Mackay included “a list of the Corps of Michigan Fencibles, when disbanded at Michilimackinac July 1815” as prepared by James Pullman, Lieutenant of the late Michigan Fencibles. Pullman, in the letter attached to the list, noted that:

[…] all the men Enlisted into that Corps, were duly inspected by a surgeon and legally attested before a magistrate conformable to the articles of war,
some of whom while stationed at Fort McKay on the Mississippi (sic) received Corporal Punishment for unsoldier like behaviour (Pullman, PAC 1825).

The list produced by Pullman includes 65 names, and of these, at least 21 are those of people who will later be residing in Penetanguishene after 1828, a number of them Métis. This list of soldiers does not, of course, include all the voyageurs or Métis that aided the British forces, for instance in the expedition against the fort on Mackinac Island which included 180 of them. The names for example of Charles Langlade and William Solomon, whose participation is noted in other documents by the British military, are not found here.

A. C. Osborne mentions the participation of several men in the war, for example Louis George Labatte who:

[...] also formed one of the contingent of one hundred and sixty French-Canadian voyageurs accompanying Mr. Pothier, under Captain Roberts, at the capture of Mackinaw by the British in July, 1812, and three years later he moved to Drummond Island with the British forces on the second transfer of Mackinaw to the Americans, and finally to Penetanguishene (Osborne, 1901: 138).

Michael Labatte, in 1901, recalled that:

My father was Louis George Labatte, a blacksmith by trade, who was born in Lower Canada. He was a soldier in the British Army, and was at the capture of Mackinaw in 1812. He went up from Montreal with the North-West Company, and moved from Mackinaw with the British soldiers to Drummond Island (Osborne, 1901:138).

Jean-Baptiste Sylvestre was also the son of a militia man.

My father's name was Jean Baptiste Sylvestre, who went up with the North-West Company, became a soldier in the British army and fought at Mackinaw. He received his discharge, moved to Drummond Island with the troops, and started business as a fur trader. He came from the North-West to help the British, and joined the force at St. Joseph Island. My mothers' maiden name was Angelique McKay, a half-breed woman of Scotch descent, whom my father married at Mackinaw, where she was drowned when I was about two years old (Osborne, 1901: 142).

Colonel Mackay, later, in September 1825 wrote again to Major Hiller with regard to the problems encountered obtaining the official documentation for the raising of the Michigan Fencibles. He added that the documents:

They, when obtained, added to the Public and (armed?) services rendered by the Michigan Fencibles during the last war will, I presume entitle them to a grant of the Crown Lands (Mackay, PAC, September 1825).

Although following the war, in 1815, the British would hand Mackinac Island and its fort back to the Americans, the village of Mackinac Island was to retain its Métis character for many
years. No doubt the Métis on the Canadian side likely still frequented those that remained in the United States.

In 1818, Gurdon Saltonstal Hubbard ventured to Mackinac where:

[...] the Yankee youth found a new and exciting world – Canadian voyageurs with their families of half-breeds, the army garrison on the hill, Indians and voyageurs streaming through the village, canoes and bateaux thronging the harbour. [...] When he first saw Mackinac Island, the village of five hundred residents swarmed with three thousand traders. Boatmen and voyageurs, with another two or three thousand Indians camped along the shore (Havighurst, 1966: 148-149).

At that time, Mackinac was also noted as a centre for educating the children coming from other Upper Great Lakes communities.

Since there were no community schools until the 1820s, boys and girls had either to be tutored at home by someone literate (which was seldom done) or sent outside the region to Mackinac, Montreal, or Quebec to be educated, which few illiterate fathers apparently could afford. Only a very few illiterate people became successful traders, such as Therese Schindler and Madeleine LaFramboise of Mackinac [...] (Murphy, 2000: 55).

2.2.5 Drummond Island (1815-1828)

The signing of the Treaty of Ghent between Britain and the United States in December of 1814 marked the end of the War of 1812. On May 11, 1815, the commander of the British forces on Mackinac Island, Lieutenant Colonel McDouall received orders to turn the fort over to the Americans (Cook, 1896: 25). Fort St. Joseph having been destroyed, there seemed no reason for the British to return to St. Joseph Island. For strategic reasons, McDouall decided to relocate to Drummond Island.

To him [McDouall] it appeared both politic and necessary that the new post should be situated as to be easily accessible to the Indians, and capable of being made of even more strategic importance than Mackinaw (Cook, 1896: 26 and 29).

The issue of where the new border between the two countries would lie remaining unresolved, McDouall feared that St. Joseph Island would be given up to the Americans. For this reason, he chose the Detour passage called Pontanagipy located in a strategic position in relation to both the St. Marys River and the Straits of Mackinac and named the island Drummond, in honor of Sir Gordon Drummond, a commander during the war. Drummond Island was much rockier and neither as big nor as pleasant as St. Joseph (Landon, 1944: 196). In fact, today, in the southwest corner of the island, where the British built their fort, there is a quarry. The island lies about 1.5 km east of the mainland, 9 km south of St. Joseph Island and 54 km northeast of Mackinac Island.

This displacement was to have consequences for the civilian population of the area. At the time of the British relocation to Drummond Island, Peterson notes:
By 1815, tangible evidence of a 150-year long alliance between men of the fur trade and native women was everywhere in abundance. Throughout the upper Great Lakes region, towns and villages populated by a people of mixed heritage illustrated the vitality of the intermarriage compact. The absence of vital records nearly everywhere makes enumeration of the residents of Great Lakes fur trade society difficult; that they were a sizable and influential population should be obvious, however (Peterson, 1985 art. Many Roads: 62).

The British forces first moved stores to St. Joseph Island for storage. Then on the day they moved to Drummond Island (July 18, 1815) they were joined by civilians.

To the number of those under arms are to be added about 25 men in the employ of the Indian Department, together with a large number of families belonging to the soldiers, and the numerous attachés of the Northwest Trading Company. While no accurate return has been left of the number of people who on that July day, 1815, found themselves in the wilderness of Drummond Island engaged in the task of providing themselves shelter, a careful estimate from the data at hand places the number at between 300 and 450, exclusive of the Indians, who in large numbers were prompt to accompany them, in order to share their food supplies (Cook, 1896: 41-42).

The following summer, according to a letter by Monk, the Island’s population had grown considerably.

There were nearly 1000 Indians, Men, women and Children at Drummond’s Island at my departure from that Post on the 20th Ulto, and in a few days after many more were expected to arrive. It had been determined on by the Commanding Officer to receive them generously, and liberally supply them with presents as well as Provisions, etc. (Monk, PAC, 1816).

The fur traders were anxious to continue doing business on the Canadian side of the border, and, as it had been the case on St. Joseph, a garrison town started to establish itself.

Once it became apparent that Drummond Island was to be the site for the new post, several traders approached McDouall with requests for permission to build houses near the fort. McDouall, anxious to encourage settlement, granted lots on condition that well-finished houses of certain dimensions be built on them during the next year. [...] in late October [...] there were already a greater number of buildings on Drummond Island than there had been on St. Joseph Island. [...] in 1816 there were fifteen lots occupied, laid out along two streets. Some of the occupants were traders and others were officials of various government departments (ORN 5: Vincent, 1978: 243).

The political context after the war made it more difficult for Canadian traders to stay on the American side as illustrated by the problems encountered by Elizabeth (Bertrand) Mitchell, the mother of Métis children.
Elizabeth, wife of Doctor David Mitchell, surgeon at the posts of Mackinac, St. Joseph and Drummond, was for a time the “Stormy Petrel” of Mackinac Island. When the British garrison moved from Mackinac to Drummond in 1815 she elected to stay at the island in the house she had built and long famous for its hospitality. A friend of the Indians, speaking their language, she was accused of intrigue and duplicity by Puthoff, the American Indian Agent. [...] McDouall about this time writes to the Commanding officer of Michilimackinac as follows:

“Mrs. Mitchell as I understand it, has been prevented from putting out nets to fish, in other instances treated with marked indignation and meanly accused of being a spy, of the British Government. As such a charge necessarily implicates myself, I, with that indignation which it deserves, pronounce it to be a most illiberal calumny.”

[...] Indians gave her a deed to Round Island, across from Mackinac which was never recognized and in 1816 she joined her husband at Drummond, where she died February 26, 1827 and was buried in the Post Cemetery on the Island (Emery, 1931: 7-8).

The fort was located in a bay that the British named Port Collier or Collier’s Harbour (present day Whitney Bay). The harbour contained a point on its eastern side and a small island on the opposite side.

On June 27, 1816, Lt. Col. McDouall, the Commander of Fort Drummond, submitted a list to his superiors of people to whom he had granted building lots. Permission to build was granted with three conditions, the first being that the lots these people held would automatically “revert to the Crown in case of non-settlement and non-residence”. The second, was that the government could “re-occupy or repossess any lot” if it deemed it necessary. Finally, the third stated that the only title people could receive for these lots was “a license of occupancy” that would be renewed from year to year, until the Crown decided otherwise. The lots were “fifty feet in front and one hundred and fifty in depth”. McDouall also wrote that once the border between Canada and the United States was firmly established the settlers would be required “to build substantial houses of a respectable and uniform appearance in front of the different lots” (McDouall, PAC, 1816).

At this date, there was a total of 18 individuals that had received lots, including the following names: Lot no. 1, Mr. Soloman; lot 11, La Croix and Gordon; lot 12, Dr. Mitchell; lot 14, Mr. Simpson; lot 16, Mr. Gruet (Grouette?), and on the Rear Street, lot 1, Mr. Soloman Indian Dept.; lot 2, Mr. Cadotte; lot 3, Mr. Rawson and lot 6, Le Batte.

At the Drummond Island museum, there is a table model of the fort and surrounding village based on archeological and historical data. In the presentation of this model it is explained that:

Originally homes were to be no less than 49 feet long and 12 feet tall. They were to be made of sawed lumber and painted white. (There is no evidence that these “regulations” were ever enforced, so most were probably log type structures on smaller lots). The first year, fifteen lots were occupied, eventually, about forty homes were built many with detached kitchens to avoid chance of fire. A few were large two story. Some of the home builders were traders, some government (Indian department) officials and some military families.

Many of the finer buildings in the village were built for the fur traders with money from the fur trade. These building (sic) do not show on official
documents, but there existence is proven. These buildings were used both for
the storage of furs and as living areas (Drummond Island Museum, s.d.).

The doubt as to whether the British would retain Drummond Island or not, made them
hesitant to build extensive fortifications. In October 1815, Earl Bathurst gave directions that the
construction of fortifications on the island would have to wait the commissioners report (Cook,
1896: 43). During its first winter, in 1815-1816, the garrison seems to have been in dire straits.

There seems to have been an entire lack of ready resource on the part of all
concerned, for they were able during the winter, to secure but few fish in a
locality where they are known to plentifully abound, and there is no
evidence of any attempt to secure wild game, although there was a large
number of Indians and Canadians (presumably half-breeds) at the post the
entire winter, who ought to have been exercising their skill in providing a
supply of the luscious wild meats for which that region has so long been
famous (Cook, 1896: 62).

Nevertheless, during the next ten years, the precarious position of lot holders on
Drummond Island did not prevent the formation of a community. McDouall was boasting that 14
lots had been granted facing the harbor and as many on another street. He had hopes that: “the
town will have a fine effect from the beautiful picturesque harbor [...]” (Cook, 1896: 60-61). A
few years later, a visitor to the island described the settlement in the following manor:

When Major Delafield visited Drummond Island in 1820 the settlement
consisted of one straight street of fifteen or more comfortable two-story log
houses, well whitewashed. [...] The dwellings of the regular residents were
grouped together close to a curious inlet about two hundred feet wide, which
ran inland for two miles. At its point the Indians had their wigwams and
tpees which Delafield found filthy and crowded with squaws and children
(Landon, 1944: 197).

Captain Thomas Gummersol Anderson of the Indian Department, in a letter from
Drummond Island in July of 1817, describes the sorry state of the First Nation residents of the
island.

There are a great number of Indians who are proprietary and actual
inhabitants of this Island, that have been for many years past exhorted to
cultivate the land and raise corn and potatoes sufficient for their winter
consumption; to this advice they have turned a deaf ear, and idle away
their time in the Summer Season slothfully in drinking [...] and in the
winter Season, when neither fish nor hare are to be caught sufficient for
their support, were they not to receive the provisions they do from
Government, they would actually perish with hunger (Anderson, PAC,
1817: 19677).

In the same letter, Anderson, in requesting that the Indian Department obtain a
schoolmaster for the post, paints a clear picture of what he refers to as the two classes of children
on the island:
There are great numbers of children now among the Indians here who by being learnt to --- ----- and brought in for religious duties might soon become valuable subjects, and in a few years be extricated from the unfortunate and horrid life of want and desolation they now appear doomed to have.

The first class of children I alude (sic) to were those of the officers at different times stationed in this vicinity. These poor orphans, many of which perhaps never saw their Fathers, and are left totally unprovided for with their unfortunate mothers to be brought up in all the torture of want and vice possible to immagine (sic).

The second class are the children of the labouring Canadians a (set /sort/state?) of poor people who at an early period of their lives got (connected?) with the Indian women and gradually became so much attached to each other as frequently to live together for life, bring large families into the world and have not the means, however fond they may be of their children, of giving them the first? education or even teaching them a propriety of conduct for their future guidance and welfare, consequently these children are more to be pitied tho’ less valuable to themselves, to the public in general than the poor savages. Therefore an indulgence of this kind from government would be a real and permanent blessing to these unfortunate wretches. And I have not the smallest doubt, but the inhabitants of this place would, with great alacrity set about building comfortable quarters to care for a person of that description with less? expense (Anderson, PAC, 1817: 19677-19679).

Although some of this text remains illegible, it is clear that the references here are to two types of Métis children living on Drummond Island, those with a European father, being brought up by their First Nation mother, and those being raised by both their parents, First Nation mother and Canadian (French) father. In Anderson’s view, the latter Métis children are even worse off than the former. Although he may in this letter be overstating his case to elicit sympathy for his request for a schoolmaster, his description and the terms used are unequivocal.

Despite the fact that the British had resettled on Drummond Island, St. Joseph Island had not been abandoned altogether. There remained a military presence on the island. As well:

Major Howard of Fort Drumm ond reported to his superior in November, 1818, that several persons had applied for permission to purchase land on St. Joseph. [...] He thought it would be advantageous to the post on Drummond, however, if a few settlers were allowed to till the soil on St. Joseph (Bayliss, 1938: 77).

Although we have little information of what life on Drummond island was like for the civilian population, in all likelihood the pattern of a large transient population surge in summer followed by a much smaller winter resident population would have been repeated here as at Michilimackinac, Mackinac Island, and St. Joseph Island. Pat McArthur, in outlining the family history of the Normandin, alludes to this transient lifestyle.
Joseph Normandin was a Montrealer who signed a voyageur contract with Mackinac trader Dr. David Mitchell, on April 27, 1820, [ ... ] [he] removed to Penetanguishene in 1837, and then to Killarney (ORN 2). The latter no doubt a choice influenced by close ties to the Solomon family through his wife, Margaret Solomon, daughter of William Solomon and Marguerite Johnston.

The Normandin’s first known child, Marie, was baptised in 1825 at Drummond Island, the socio-economic hub of the Lakes; and where the family would have rendezvoused each summer (McArthur, 2005: 127).

T.G. Anderson, in a letter from Drummond Island on January 20, 1820, notes that: “the number of Indians clothed at this post are 1175 men 1183 women and 1555 children. Total 3,913” (Anderson, PAC, 1820). By 1823, the garrison contained a total of 18 buildings (Cook, 1896: 66).

Among some of the more prominent residents of Drummond Island, there is the Solomon family whose ancestor, Ezekiel Solomon, was a German Jew born in Berlin who had come to Montreal as a youth.

The Solomon family had for sixty years been members of the official and civilian colonies at Fort Michilimackinac, removing to the Island [St. Joseph] in 1796, and we find them again when Drummond was established in 1815 (Emery, 1931: 5-6).

The Solomon’s would be among those moving to Penetanguishene in 1828. The Drummond Island Historical Museum has in its collection one of the only surviving pieces of the settlement, the wooden grave marker of William Solomon buried in the island’s cemetery in 1826.

The British and the clergy both seemed to feel that Drummond Island was an isolated community. In the spring of 1819, Father Crevier complained to his superior, Monsignor Panet:

And now, Monsignor, according to your letter, I still must go to Drummond Island [...] I will leave towards the middle of June at the latest in the hopes that I won’t remain alone in such a far away mission where there are so many dangers (Letter by Father Crevier to Mgr Panet, dated May 12 1812, Archives of the Archdiocese of Québec, Register « Diocèse de Sandwich », Haut-Canada, cahier no. 4, folio 135, as quoted in Gobeil, 1956: 154). (Our translation)

Original French :
Maintenant, Monseigneur, d’après votre lettre, je me trouve toujours obligé de me rendre à Drummond Island... Je me mettrai en route vers la mi-juin au plus tard, dans l’espérance de ne pas être laissé seul dans une mission aussi éloignée et où il a tant de dangers à courir.

Another clergyman, Mgr Provencher, visited the island en route for Manitoba in 1822. There were, according to his account, around 500 Catholics for the most part French-Canadians married to First Nation women. He married one couple and baptised 24 children. He asked the bishop of Québec to send a priest as soon as possible to the island. Five years later, both the Catholic and Protestant civilians of the island united their efforts to obtain a school and religious instruction in a request dated April 8, 1827 (Gobeil, 1956: 156-158). Cook notes that:

[...] it need be doubted that the ever-toiling, earnest and unwearying Catholic clergy from the Sault or Mackinaw, or both, made not infrequent visits, and
were on the alert for the good of their French and half-breed faithful, as well as the Indians generally (Cook, 1896: 96).

Lewis Solomon, a resident of the island at that time, relates that:

Fathers Crevier and Baudin were the only priests who visited Drummond Island in my recollection. There was another interpreter named Goroitte, a clerk at Drummond Island, who issued marriage licenses (Osborne, 1901: 130).

A.C. Osborne also mentions Goroitte, in his biographical remarks about Julie Goroite, the:

[...] half-breed mother of Julia Frances Labatte. She came from Drummond Island with Louis George Labatte, and died at Holland Landing the same year of typhoid fever. She married James Goroite, a Protestant Englishman, who went from Montreal to Drummond Island as schoolmaster, “avocat”, and issuer of marriage licenses (Osborne, 1901: 9).

Some of the houses on Drummond Island are typical of a Métis settlement of the period.

In addition to the more solid and comfortable homes of the more opulent of the inhabitants, very many of the people found not uncomfortable shelter in structures called “bark lodges”. These were made of a framework of poles, covered over, roof and sides, with cedar bark. Houses of that kind were very comfortable while new, but decayed very rapidly, and were liable to take fire and be consumed almost in a breath (Cook, 1896: 8).

A public bakery, another characteristic of the organisation of some Métis communities in the Upper Great Lakes, is also present.

There are now no traces of an oven in connection with these houses, nor indeed any cranes in the fireplaces, and it would seem that the private as well as the public baking was done in the large bake house, situated on a little neck of land projecting into the Bay, and nearly surrounded by water (Cook, 1896: 11).

It is interesting to note that a public bakery was also a notable feature of Mackinac as shown in the following remarks about Elizabeth Baird in Green Bay.

As a third generation Métisse, Elizabeth had eaten plenty of bread in her short life while growing up in Mackinac, but she had never learned how to make it. Because Mackinac, like Prairie du Chien, included bakeries among its businesses, people simply bought bread (Murphy, 2000: 65).

Cook also notes the participation of civilian labour in the construction of the military installations on Drummond Island. In relation to the main roadway he notes that:

The labor and expense incident to the construction of this boulevard were not slight; and considering the fact that during all the period of the occupation the
local army chest was hampered for funds for the needed repair of the buildings of the post, it may be believed that the expense was met from sources other than those apparent. The inhabitants, no doubt, made contributions of money and labor, but it would not be strange if considerable quantities of the presents charged out as distributed by the Indian Department were used in payment for the labor expended on this excellent piece of road construction. The same is true of the artillery road [...] (Cook, 1896:17).

The economic activity was largely centered around the trade with the First Nations who came to trade and receive presents.

The post at Drummond Island was regularly supplied each year with a vast amount of “Indian goods”, which included everything in the way of wearing apparel, guns, ammunition, cooking utensils and the inevitable rum, all of which were distributed to their dusky visitors, or at least charged up on the accounts of the Indian Department as so distributed (Cook, 1896: 68).

The summer population would swell to as many as 4,500 people. In the general area there were around 15,000 First Nation people of the Chippewa, Ottawa, Potawatomi tribes (Drummond Island Museum, s.d.). These First Nation visitors were not necessarily given a fair deal.

At each recurring visit they were fed and supplied at the King's expense. But between the military officers and the fur traders, the Indians were sorely cheated (Cook, 1896: 69).

A few bits of surviving correspondence from the island give varied perceptions of life there. On January 1, 1822, E. Fournier writing to George Gordon on Drummond Island, asks: “Give me a general account of the Transactions at Drummond Island for it’s a Celebrated (sic) place for farces of every kind” (Gordon Papers, no. 7). William Simpson writing from Drummond Island on January 9, 1822 mentions that: “Provisions are very high here at present and money is as plenty as ever (that is in a small way).” He adds that: “as for news we are as barren as our Island is of Gold mines [...] I hope the hunt has been as good with you as here, Rolette & Mitchell have now about 5 packs furs which is a good deal at this time of the year” (Gordon Papers, no. 15).

However, David Mitchell, writing to his son from the island on January 11, 1828, declared that: “This place affords nothing new it's as dull as the very devil and the people living in it are getting poorer and poorer every day” (Gordon Papers no 5).

In the years following the War of 1812, not only had the political situation changed but the economic context of the fur trade continued to evolve over the next two decades. Peterson summarises this change and its impact on the Métis.

The denouement in the Great Lakes region came rushing in on the heels of American Fur Company absorption and destruction of the independent traders. Intense competition between American and British trading companies had stripped much of the Great Lakes of furs by the early 1830s. [...] Some Métis had sensed the end and had migrated northwest to Minnesota and to Red River. Others hedged. [...] The majority, however, fled to the sanctuary of native kin, or pulled up stakes and migrated to former trading stations and new town sites close to a reservation or band village where their mediational
and transportation skills could be employed for a few decades more (ORN 25: Peterson, 1984)

This is no doubt the case of those who will move to Penetanguishene. The new border, when it was finally established between Canada and the United States, would force the British to cede Drummond Island in November 1828 and remove to Penetanguishene as we will see in more detail in the following section. Although an exact figure of the civilian population on the island at that time is hard to establish, it should be noted that the most complete list of those that moved from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene contains 283 names (Patterson, 1987).

After the removal of the British military and the civilians from Drummond Island, a few French-Canadians and First Nation people remained on the island for a few years “making a meagre living from fishing and trapping” (Hamil, 1961: 251). In 1829, James Wickins writes that:

A village of about forty dwelling houses stood at the upper end of the bay, but only three families intended remaining on the island. About five miles from this was a village of Christian Indians, who planned to move to Canada. (ORN 11: letter from James Wickins to Lt. Colonel Foster, 13 Feb. 1829, PAC, RG8 C Series, vol. 675 pp 124-125, as quoted in Vincent, 1978: 261-262).

As this section shows, the Métis that will move to the Penetanguishene area had already formed a community before moving to southern Georgian Bay. That is to say the community definitely exists in Drummond Island (as of 1815), and to a certain extent in St. Joseph Island (between 1796 and 1812) as well on Mackinac Island (between 1780 and 1796) and in Michilimackinac (between 1720 and 1780). Part of this larger Métis community of the Upper Great Lakes is displaced to Penetanguishene as of 1828. There are examples of families, notably the Solomon, Langlade, and Mitchell Métis families that moved to all of these locations. The geographic base of this group of Métis changes to become Penetanguishene, but the Métis community itself remains the same.

It can also be argued that although the Métis community became based in Penetanguishene during the 1820-1840 period, the area it evolved in expanded to include Georgian Bay as well as its traditional homeland in the Upper Great Lakes. As Peterson notes:

[...] because the [Métis] families did not constitute an agricultural society, they did not develop a keen sense of the value of individual property rights, particularly in the smaller hamlets where houses were easily bartered or swapped among neighbours and even improved lands were sold for a pittance [...] Such intraregional mobility seems to have fostered, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, a personal and group identity which was less place-specific than regionally and occupationally defined (Peterson, 1985, art. Many Roads: 63).

Other historians have taken a similar view.

Because the Métis never occupied a clearly bounded tribal territory, Diane Payment (2001: 661) argues that “it is more appropriate to place emphasis on local communities and resource areas and directions of historical movement and migration than to suggest a long-term or exclusive possession of any region.” Although Payment’s argument is made in the context of
Plains Métis, the same may apply to historic Métis populations in Ontario (Reimer, 2004: 591).

The link between the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes and the Ojibwa of Sault Ste. Marie also appears in the story of one of the dominant First Nations leaders of the period, Shingwaukonse. As historian Janet Chute explains:

Shingwaukonse was a product of the fur trade, the Métis son of an Ojibwa woman and a French trader, probably Levoine Barthe of the Barthe family at Sault Ste. Marie, which maintained close kin and trade ties with the prominent merchant John Askin Sr. at Mackinac. Culturally, however, Shingwaukonse was wholly Ojibwa, since his mother left her French consort to rejoin her people while her son was in childhood. [...] Prior to this date, [1836 he] employed one of his two French names, either Levoine Bart (Barthe) or Augustan, as a personal identifier (Chute, 1995: 160).

In the same article, Chute goes on to describe the evolution of the Métis situation in the Sault area.

With the unification of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, many former company personnel found themselves unemployed. Some of these individuals, mostly Métis, joined with independent traders retiring from Drummond Island and Penetanguishene and settled in the environs of the British Sault.

As a result, over thirty Métis homesteads suddenly materialized along the shoreline on the British side of the rapids. Most of the men were engaged in the Sault fishery, although some worked as boat builders, guides, canoe men, carpenters, and translators for the Hudson's Bay Company. Illicitly, they participated in the whiskey trade. Many were married to Native women; those who were not tended to take wives from the Sault band. No longer were opportunities available for these Métis to enter the northern or western trade, and even on the immediate home front, horizons were limited. Furbearers had declined dramatically in numbers by 1830 (Chute, 1995: 163-164).

In the 1830s, the Ojibwa from the Sault would travel to Penetanguishene:

[... ] fur brigades under Shingwaukonse's headship still plied each year to the Hudson's Bay post operating at La Cloche on the north shore of Lake Huron, enjoyed a feast provided by the company, and traded some of their furs before proceeding on to part with the rest of their peltry at the British distribution of presents at Penetanguishene (Chute, 1995: 164).

Captain T. G. Anderson, the Indian Agent on Drummond Island dealing with the First Nations and Métis people there, suggested “weaning Natives away from the fur trade, and placing them in agricultural settlements away from the international border” (Chute, 1995: 162). His proposal however did not gain the approval of the main people concerned.
A second disturbing incident for the Ojibwa concerned the intention of one prominent British Indian agent, Thomas G. Anderson, to move all the Métis at the British Sault to St. Joseph's Island on the pretext that Métis traders were poor neighbors for incipient Native farmers. Since 1819 Anderson had remained true to his goal of establishing government-controlled Native farming communities on the western frontier. His definition of "Métis" nevertheless included some prominent members of the old Crane band. Waubechechauk's son, Nebenagoching, fell into this category since his mother had been a daughter of a Sault trader, Jean Baptiste Perrault. Even Shingwaukonse's eldest son, Pierre Lavoine, was among those enumerated who would be relocated to St. Joseph's Island (ORN 50).

For Shingwaukonse to deny these Métis individuals his support would have been tantamount to relinquishing his responsibility toward the Cranes as a whole. So when Anderson deprived Nebenagoching in 1835 of his British medal and chiefly status, allegedly owing to Nebenagoching's whiskey smuggling, and conferred these on Shingwaukonse, (ORN 51) the latter immediately rose up as the Métis' advocate. Anderson, seeing the futility of any attempt to control this new turn of events by resorting to divide-and-conquer techniques, pressured Shingwaukonse and his followers to move to Manitoulin Island. The chief adamantly refused, and relocated his family and followers to Garden River, where, with the assistance of local Métis, they began building their own log cabins and cultivating crops well beyond the scrutiny of Indian Department officialdom (ORN 52: Chute, 1995: 165-166).

As we will see later, in 1845, Anderson would plead in favour of helping the Métis obtain title to their land in the Sault Ste. Marie area.

A project to develop lands on St. Joseph Island in the early 1830s makes reference to the Métis of the area. In 1834, Major William Kingdom Rains:

 [...] proposed to the government of Upper Canada that he and others associated with him be given a land grant on St. Joseph Island upon which they planned to settle one hundred families (Landon, 1944: 188).

Sir John Colborne, the lieutenant governor at the time, looked favourably on the project:

Being persuaded that it is desirable to locate some respectable settlers in that quarter, who are qualified to act as Magistrates and who will exert themselves to preserve order among the Canadian voyageurs and half Indians settled at the Sault Ste. Marie [...] (letter by J. Colborne to Major Rains from Toronto, 20th Dec. 1834, quoted in Bayliss, 1938: 94-95).

The following year the settlement got under way. In 1835:

When [Rains and his] partners arrived at St. Joseph, the only inhabitants were some Frenchmen and half-breeds living at a small fishing village on the north side of Milford Haven [on the southwest tip of the island near where Fort St. Joseph had stood] (Bayliss, 1938: 96).
These residents at the time were selling their fish and furs at Sault Ste. Marie (Landon, 1944: 190). Rains and his partners seem to have made little progress in their first years. In July 1839, Samuel P. Jarvis, Superintendent of Indians Affairs, reported that:

On this point [Milford Haven] are ten small houses, each occupied by a family averaging about 5 souls. [...] These families are all French Canadians and half breeds, with the exception of Mr. Peck and his clerk [Mr. Scott] who are Americans (Bayliss, 1938: 98).

In the same report, he notes that the St. Joseph Island settlers do little farming but fish (Bayliss, 1938: 101). The prosperous settlement envisioned by Rains did not come into existence though permanent Métis settlement in the area had begun.

Historian David McNab paints the larger picture of the Métis population at that time:

Prior to 1850, [...] Metis people in Ontario were seen as distinct local groups, or as families, or as individuals who were located at or near the centres of the fur trade. They were primarily associated with the activities of that trade and with centres such as present-day Moose Factory, Penetanguishene, Thunder Bay, Fort Frances and Kenora. Although it is impossible to determine exact numbers, there would have been at least several hundred people, perhaps a few thousand, who saw themselves as Metis (McNab, 1985: 59).

But in the context of the larger Upper Great Lakes, this estimate could be considered much larger. Peterson believes that by the late 1820s, there could have been ten thousand to fifteen thousand residents of métis communities south and west of Lakes Superior and Huron (Peterson, 1985, art. Many Roads: 63). As it was noted in regards to the Powley ruling:

The trial judge found that a distinctive Métis community emerged in the Upper Great Lakes region in the mid-17th century and peaked around 1850 (Supreme Court of Canada, 2003: para. 21).

The Penetanguishene Métis can be traced back at least to Charles Michel Langlade (son of Augustin Langlois and widow Domitille Villeneuve, née Nissowaquet) born in 1729 (baptised at Michilimackinac May 9, 1729). He is the first Métis born of a lineage that is probably the oldest to have spawned descendants in Penetanguishene.

In conclusion, the origins of the Penetanguishene Métis community is closely linked to the development of the Métis of the Upper Great Lakes.
Map 3: Georgian Bay
3. The Métis community in Penetanguishene (from the 1820s)

3.1 Before the 1820s

Prior to the military base established in Penetanguishene and the arrival of the Métis, there is evidence of the presence of fur traders in the general area. “Little has been written of this fur trade activity in lower Georgian Bay, and particularly the “environs” of Matchedash Bay (near Penetanguishene)” (McArthur, 2005: 135).

However, McArthur adds that there are references to these early posts just east of Penetanguishene Bay:

By at least 1716, the shores of Matchedash Bay near present-day Penetanguishene were being resettled by the Indians. One Monsieur de Sabrevois going up the west side of Lake Huron reported:

On the other side of Lake Huron, -- that is, to the North, -- is Matchitache, settled by missaguez savages, who have the same customs at the outaouacs. You have here the portage of Toronto, which takes you from lake ontariau to Lake Huron, a distance of fifteen leagues. (ORN 3: 1718: Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, describing their customs and trade. [Translated from a MS, in archives of Ministère des Colonies, Paris; pressmark, “Canada, Corresp. gen. vol. 39, c. 11, fol. 354] Endorsed: “Furnished by Monsieur de Sabrevois in 1718. 6 Canada” SHWS, Vol. 16) (McArthur, 2005: 136).

McArthur goes on to explain that Jean-Baptiste Latellier (employed by the Mackinac trader Simon Guillory) and his Nipissing wife, had children who were baptised at Mackinac. “They were said to be born “in the direction of Matchidash,” the first child about 1733” (McArthur, 2005: 136).

According to McArthur’s research there would have been “considerable trade at Matchedash and in Lake Huron from the mid 1780s” (McArthur, 2005: 136). She mentions:

Pierre Thierry [who] was born 1750 at Montreal. [...] was also a trader and from 1784 to 1786 he hired Quebecers specifically to winter at “Matchedash”. Research shows men being engaged also by others until well into the 1820s. Some were hired specifically for Matchedash and others for the “environs du lac Huron.” [...] In 1784, one of those hired by Thierry to winter at Matchedash was Pierre Lavallee of Sorel. Pierre Lavallee is said to be the father of trader Denis David Lavallee, whose descendants are in Owen Sound and Saugeen Metis communities today (McArthur, 2005: 136-137).

McArthur, like other historians, alludes to the trade carried on in Matchedash by George Cowan. This trader is noted to have been at Matchedash as early as 1778.

When Colonel John Graves Simcoe visited Gloucester Bay in October 1793 looking to the defense of the colony, he found a man named Cowan, a fur trader, who had been there for fifteen years (Landon, 1944: 142).

In a letter written by Cowan in 1786 and quoted by McArthur, he states that there are too many merchants for the post at Matchedash, with two or three venturing from either Michilimackinac or Montreal to the area (ORN 4: A Trader’s note [Translation of a letter from

The first fur trade store in Georgian Bay for which there is written information was built at Matchedash Bay and was in operation by 1793. Its owner, a Mr. Cowan, who was also known by a French name (Jean Baptiste Constant) is described by Murray as the most important independent trader in the Penetanguishene and Muskoka areas in the 1790s (Praxis, 2000: 54).

During Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe’s trip to the area in 1793, the post was described in this way:

Mr. Cowan’s house, or rather Fort, for it is a regular square enclosed with good pickets; his house is in one, his store opposite to it in another, an outhouse for Corn, Potatoes &c in a third, & the gate in the fourth; he does not allow the Indians to get drunk within this Garrison. At 8 O ‘clock Mr. Cowan who had been out hunting during the day, being returned, came to pay his respects to the Governor — Mr. Cowan is a decent, respectable looking man & much liked by the Indians [...] (Murray, 1963: 18, quoted in Praxis, 2000: 54).

At the time, Cowan had a staff of six people and his family residing with him (ORN 47: Marchand, 1989: 24). Also present, at the Narrows separating Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe where Orillia lies today, Quetton Saint-George, emigrated from France in 1798, had a successful trading post for a few years starting in 1802.

Thus, there was, in the 18th century: “a transportation corridor linking Lake Ontario fur trade posts with Michilimackinac and other Upper Lakes posts” (Praxis, 2000: v). Along this corridor, traders established small stores. In her research, Pat McArthur has found that there were: “four posts in Lake Huron that were established/formalized as Norhwest Company posts at: Green Lake, Lacloche, Inland Post (Villemeure), and south East Lake (Matchedash). [...] These four posts existed from 1784 to 1821 and were most probably locations where the traders were already trading for years” (McArthur, 2006). She has also noted that the Bourassa family, linked by marriage and family ties to the Longlade family, were known to have operated posts in Georgian Bay, one near the mouth of the Shawanaga, up to around 1818.

Governor Simcoe, at the prompting of the North West Company, was in favour of creating a rapid transportation link between York and and Lake Huron. Following his trip to the area in 1793, in a letter to the Privy Council dated December 20, 1794, he expressed the opinion that:

I contemplate that Gloucester (Penetanguishene), from its situation, as bidding fair to be in a very short space of time the most considerable town in Upper-Canada (ORN 43, quoted in Marchand, 1989: 23).

As a first step, the British signed a treaty with the First Nation people confirming the surrender of a tract of land and the harbour on Penetanguishene Peninsula on May 22 1798.

According to Surtees (1984:64) the surrender was negotiated following complaints by the Northwest Company that its fur trade operations from the Penetanguishene Peninsula were subject to harassment and seizures by

The military presence and settlement would not start in earnest until the War of 1812 which pushed the government to finally commence construction of a naval base, opened in 1817, after the end of the war.

As early as 1817, at least one person who was to be one of the founding members of the Penetanguishene Métis community, Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, was already in the area, although not yet settled here. Trudeau is listed as a blacksmith at the Penetanguishene Naval Establishment from May 1817 to October 1820 (Brodeur, 1983). He was then posted to Fort William until 1823 and to the Indian Department at Drummond Island from 1823 to 1828 (Patterson, notes: 13).

Lewis Solomon gives some information on another early settler:

Beausoleil Island (Prince William Henry Island) was formerly called St. Ignace by the French. A French-Canadian, named Beausoleil, from Drummond Island, settled there in 1819, and it was named afterwards from him. He died at Beausoleil Point, near Penetanguishene (Osborne, 1901: 128).

According to Pat McArthur’s research, following the merger of the Northwest Company with the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) in 1821, the HBC formed the Lake Huron District with nine posts: Mississaugi (near Sault Ste. Marie), Green Lake, Lacloche, Whitefish Falls, Nipissing, French River, Shawanaga, Isle au Sable, and Saguingue (Southampton). Some of the HBC employees at this time identified by McArthur that are also listed as Drummond Islanders who moved to Penetanguishene and were married to Métis women are: Louis Baril Lajoie (married to Marie Leveque in 1837 in Penetanguishene), Godroy Boyer, Simon Champagne, Charles Cote, Louis Chevrette, Michel Frechette, Louis Faille, Regis Loranger, Jacques Parisien, and Michel Restoule (McArthur, 2006).

In 1822, Commander Douglas at the Naval Base reports that a merchant from Drummond Island asked him for permission to set up shop next to the naval establishment. “He has left his Goods at a Mr. Deshnoux here, and is gone to York for permission he says [...] (Douglas, PAC, 1822). This trader mentioned here seems in all likelihood to be:

Joseph C. Descheneau who was operating for the American Fur Company and is on the List of Traders who had a joint account with the Company. On Aug 1, 1822, merchandise was delivered by Wm. W. Matthews at Drummond Island, to Joseph C. Descheneau for trade at Penetanguishene. Also Descheneau worked for the Company with a Mr. Charpentier at Penetanguishene during the early 1820s according to American Fur Company Records (McArthur, 2006).

Also mentioned as being among the first to move from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene is George Gordon, the father of Métis children.

A Scotch trader named Gordon from Drummond Island made, in 1825, the first permanent settlement at Penetanguishene, on the east side of the harbor, just beyond Barracks Point, and called it the “Place of Penetangoushene.”
Gordon’s first wife was a daughter of Mrs. Agnes Landry, a French-Ojibway woman, who was born on Drummond Island, and who accompanied the daughter's family to their wilderness home. At a later date he formed the nucleus of the future town, building the first house, which still stands, and is occupied by his descendants, the Misses Gordon. His second wife was a daughter of Charles Langlade. Gordon died in 1852, aged 65 years.

Other voyageurs are known to have been at Penetanguishene as early as 1816, but only as transient traders [...] (Osborne, 1901: 125). [Note: in a later article, the same author states that Gordon arrived in 1824 (Osborne, 1908: 50)].

Osborne mentions as well that, in 1827, four more families settled at Gordon's Point: Donovan, Prior, Desmaison, and Modeste Lemire (Osborne, 1908: 44). In 1825, Gordon moved his house and business to a location where the future town of Penetanguishene would develop, on present day Water Street. This is the first permanent house built in the town (ORN 27: Marchand, 1989: 70).

George Gordon and Dedine Revolte are credited with building first houses in Penetanguishene in 1824-1825. Revolte was an associate of Gordon’s at Drummond Island, and apparently they continued to conduct business together in Penetanguishene (Doc. #60: 4, Praxis, 2000: 79).

An officer reporting to his superior from Penetanguishene in 1828 makes reference to the scarcity of settlers.

The communication to Penetanguishene consists of good land carriage from York to the Holland Landing [...] and from thence to Penetanguishene the land Transport is about 38 miles but not open for wheeled carriages; this road has a few settlers upon it, and the nearest settler lives about 3 miles from the Post of Penetanguishene (Hare, PAC, 1828).

3.2 The move from Drummond Island (1828-1829)

The displacement of the Métis civilian population from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in the late 1820s was to provoke a significant change in this community that, since the late 1700s, had sided with the British in its conflicts with the Americans in order to defend its interests with regard to the fur trade, an important part of its livelihood. Although the British military knew that Drummond Island was to be ceded to the Americans as early as 1822, it did nothing to prepare for the withdrawal before the last minute, when they handed over their fort to the Americans in November of 1828. One historian notes that:

Major Winnett and his command [at Fort Drummond] were relieved June 10, 1822, by a detachment of the 76th Regiment, Major Goff commanding. It was during this year that the determination of the commissioners under the treaty, that Drummond Island did not belong to the King became known at the post, and was the cause of no little correspondence and query as to what to do next. There was, however, no haste on the part of the British authorities to withdraw from United States territory (Cook, 1896: 66).
The same author states that the only thing that really concerned the British at this point was to find a suitable place to continue offering presents to their First Nation allies. They concluded that this could be done at Amherstburg and Penetanguishene (Cook, 1896: 119).

The fur traders would follow the military and the First Nation people.

After 1821, however, the amalgamation of the Hudson’s Bay Company with the Northwest Company produced a drastic change in the orientation of the upper lakes’ fur trade towards the north and the Hudson’s Bay system. The fur trade that continued to focus on Drummond Island was in the hands of relatively small dealers. Following the cession of Drummond Island to the United States in 1822, a number of these traders moved their operations to Penetanguishene. For the same reason, the venue of the annual presentation of “gifts” to the Indian bands was moved there, together with the small military garrison [...] (Fieguth, 1968: 17).

Three years later, a recommendation was made for the removal to Penetanguishene. According to Folkes, the disposition of the garrison was anticipated in 1825, when Major General Carmichael-Smyth, who was inspecting the defences of British North America, recommended a withdrawal to Penetanguishene in the event of the Island’s loss. “Yet, despite indications that removal of the garrison would be necessary, the army made no preparations for such a transfer until the very eve of the Island’s forfeiture to the United States” (Folkes, Royal).

When the removal finally did occur, it was plagued by a number of problems.

The order for the abandonment of the post and the transfer of the small garrison to Penetanguishene on Matchedash Bay, having been given, as well as the arrangement for turning over everything except the garrison movable, to an officer of the United States, a brig, the Duke of Wellington, of 130 tons burthen, had been sent from Fort Erie to effect the transfer. It was now later in the season than it was usual to attempt navigation on Lake Huron, but the evacuation could not be longer delayed. The post was to be left behind very much as it had been first occupied, without adequate means for the removal, and with a haste amounting to precipitancy.

For 13 years this island had been the abode of a large number of people. Entering upon it in a wilderness state, they had made for themselves real homes, and accumulated about them quantities of those things which are necessary to home life, and without which frontier life would be unbearable. The family cow, the horse, the pigs, the sheep, poultry, and the produce of their well cared for gardens, were now to be abandoned.

The Duke of Wellington was not able to take in her possible cargo even the government property, and the garrison with their families, and a small United States schooner - the Cincinnati - was chartered to assist in carrying away what was absolutely necessary. [...]

It was on November 14, 1828, that T. Pierce Simonton, Lieutenant U.S.A., sent thither from Fort Brady to receive the surrender, gave his receipt for the 20 buildings which had been occupied strictly for government purposes, and
on the 16th the two vessels set sail in a blustering snowstorm for their destination in undisputed British territory. The number of persons who that day embarked from the shores of Drummond Island, as shown by the return of D. A. C. General, James Wickens, was 7 officers, 40 men, 15 women, 26 children and 3 servants; a total of 91 people. They arrived at Penetanguishene on the 21st of the month, having endured the storm and the choppy seas of the Georgian Bay for five long weary days (Cook, 1896: 79-82).

Lt. Carson of the 68th Regiment handed over the island to the Americans. Of the 91 people that moved with the soldiers, 81 arrived at Penetanguishene and included: 12 women, 22 children, 3 servants, Lt. Carson, 35 soldiers, 3 Indian Department men, a surgeon, a Deputy Assistant Commissary General (DACG), a clerk, and issuer, and a labourer (all commissariat), and 18 ½ tons of baggage. A large number of those displaced by the move were to submit claims for losses of personal property during the move and these would take two years to be settled (Penetanguishene: 17).

At the same time, presumably shortly after the Wellington’s departure from Drummond Island, another chartered boat, the schooner Alice Hackett also transported civilians and military personnel. However, the Alice Hackett became Georgian Bay’s first shipwreck when it hit a reef off Fitzwilliam Island. Lewis Solomon recounts the ill-fated trip in his narrative to A. C. Osborne.

When the military forces removed from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene, the Government authorities chartered the brig Wellington to carry the soldiers, military and naval supplies, and government stores; but the vessel was too small, and they were obliged to charter another vessel, and my father was instructed by the Government to charter the schooner Hackett (Alice) commanded by the owner, Capt. Hackett. On her were placed a detachment of soldiers, some military supplies, and the private property of my father, consisting of two span of horses, four cows, twelve sheep, eight hogs, harness and household furniture. A French-Canadian named Lepine, his wife and child, a tavern-keeper named Fraser, with thirteen barrels of whiskey, also formed part of the cargo. The captain and his crew and many of the soldiers became intoxicated, and during the following night a storm arose, during which the vessel was driven on a rock known as “Horse Island” (Fitzwilliam) near the southernmost point of Manitoulin Island. The passengers and crew, in a somewhat advanced stage of drunkenness, managed to reach the shore in safety; also one horse, some pork, and the thirteen barrels of whiskey, though the whole company were too much intoxicated to entertain an intelligent idea of the operation, but were sufficiently conscious of what they were doing to secure the entire consignment of whiskey. The woman and her infant were left on the wreck, as her husband, Pierre Lepine, was on shore drunk among the others, too oblivious to realize the gravity of the situation, or to render any assistance. Mrs. Lepine, in the darkness and fury of the storm, wrapped the babe in a blanket, and having tied it on her back, lashed herself securely to the mast, and there clung all night long through a furious storm of wind and drenching rain, from eleven o’clock till daylight, or about six o’clock in the morning, when the maudlin crew, having recovered in a measure from their drunken
stupor, rescued her from her perilous position in a yawl boat. Such an experience on the waters of Lake Huron, in the month of November, must have certainly bordered on the tragical. The vessel and the remainder of the cargo proved a total loss (Osborne, 1901: 127-128).

The shipwrecked crew and passengers were eventually rescued and arrived in Penetanguishene.

Patrick Folkes gives an interesting account of the move. He states that most of Drummond Island’s civilian population, which was largely French-Canadian with roots in the frontier of the Upper Lakes, followed the British to Penetanguishene. Folkes quotes Captain Anderson, writing from Penetanguishene late in February of 1829. Anderson describes the situation:

I would beg permission to suggest the propriety of allotting a portion of the unoccupied Lands near this Post to the Poor Inhabitants of Drummond Island and the Sault St. Marys (sic), who will on the Opening of the Navigation follow the Garrison to this place, where, such as are known to be good subjects, might form a small Settlement. They are, with few, if any exception, connected with the Indians, and have not the means of purchasing Lands, most of them followed us from Michilimackinac at the time it was given up to the Americans, and they now lose their dwellings with any little improvements they have made, by the evacuation of Drummond Island. The number of Families I should suppose at present would be about 50, but many Others would, most likely, in a short time avail themselves of so good an Opportunity to settle in their Native Country (ORN 153).

Anderson's suggestion was agreed to in the spring by the Lieutenant Governor (ORN 154) and forty-four individuals were subsequently granted twenty-acre lots on the west side of Penetanguishene Bay (ORN 155: Folkes, 1980: 63)

The loyalty of the voyageurs and Métis to the British certainly was a factor in their decision to follow the garrison. There were among them 20 who had fought alongside the British soldiers in the War of 1812 (Marchand, 1989: 34). Not all of the civilian occupants of the island left in November of 1828 as Cook explains:

At what time the island was finally deserted is not entirely clear, but that the town was not destroyed by the retreating occupants seems certain. The family of James Farling, the post blacksmith, remained in their home at least for the winter, and all the circumstances seem to indicate that they were not lacking for company. The civilians who, during all the years of the occupation had, from various reasons of trade and employment, in very considerable numbers made it their home, were not able, even if they desired, to obtain transport with the troops, and from the nature of the case were left to care for themselves. The lateness of the season compelled them, no doubt, to remain until the following spring [of 1829] (Cook, 1896: 83-84).
For individuals and families travelling by their own means, canoe, sailboat or bateau, the trip from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene could take anywhere from 14 to 18 days (Marchand, 1989: 35). Some individuals managed to salvage more of their property than others as indicated in a letter by Dédin Révol to George Gordon.

Since the vessel is supposed to return for a third trip to your place I’ll take advantage of this to try to send you all I can salvage from your house. I’ll mention it to Simson (sic) who I’ve hired. In one of the cases that I’m placing aboard for this trip are your three windows and a number of doors, one of which is yours. I haven’t removed the others since Mitchel (sic) is still using this house and his lease has not yet expired. (Letter by Dédin Révol, May 23, 1829, Gordon Papers no. 6, quoted in Marchand, 1989: 35).

Doubtless, the less fortunate then Gordon would not have had the means to transport doors and windows from Drummond Island. On their arrival, however, regardless of their economic state, all of the displaced Métis and voyageurs would have been faced with the challenge of rebuilding a community from scratch.

The move has been interpreted in various ways by different historians and writers. For instance:

According to Jury and Jury (1959:32), the official move from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828 was only a part of the overall voyageur “Migration”:

Fur traders had already moved into the area, and all through the spring and summer of 1829 an unknown numbers (sic) [...] of traders, bateaux-men, and voyageurs, in some manner connected with the garrison or with Canadian fur-trading interests, followed with their families, in sail-boats, bateaux, and canoes, camping on the various islands along the way.

Osborne (Doc. #46: 124) states that about seventy-five voyageur families moved from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene. Most of these families settled in the neighbourhood of the new post, where, in lieu of their abandoned homes and in reward for their military service, they were granted liberal Crown patents of land on the borders of Penetanguishene Bay. It should be noted that while the majority of families moved to Penetanguishene in the aftermath of the 1828 transfer of Drummond Island to the United states, several voyageurs and fur traders had preceded the migration, in anticipation of the British withdrawal (Praxis, 2000: 77).

An article appearing in The Barrie Magnet in 1851, summarizes the removal in the following way:

When the troops left Drummond Island, the population, amounting to about 150 or 200 souls, came away with them, although they were very
comfortably settled, leaving houses, lands and everything behind them, sacrificing all rather than live in the States, or lose the protection of the British Crown. Many of these emigrants suffered severely by removing—just at the commencement of a Canadian winter—and it was fortunate for so is (sic) that the next summer was a …..one, producing abundance of raspberries and other wild fruit on which for a month or two [they] entirely subsisted. These people were comprised of French Canadians, half breeds—a mixture between the white men and Indians, and a number of Scotch and Canadian extraction [...] (Barrie Magnet, 1851: p. 2).

The narratives compiled by A.C. Osborne give some idea of how the Métis and others from Drummond Island made the move to Penetanguishene. Lewis Solomon relates:

I was born on Drummond Island in 1821, moved to St. Joseph Island in 1825, back to Drummond Island again, and then to Penetanguishene in 1829. My father's name was William Solomon, Government interpreter. [...] My father came to Penetanguishene in another vessel [instead of the Alice Hackett] with the officers and soldiers. The rest of the family left Drummond Island the next spring [1829]. We started on the 25th of June and arrived at Penetanguishene on the 13th of July. [...] We camped one night at the Hudson's Bay Company's fort at Killarney. We landed at the Barrack's Point [...] We camped there in huts made of poles covered with cedar bark. [...] The town site of Penetanguishene was then mostly a cedar swamp, with a few Indian wigwams and fishing shanties (Osborne, 1901: 127-129).

Michael (Michel) Labatte, born in 1814, also described his family’s trip to Penetanguishene. According to the age he gives, the voyage took place in 1826, but this may not be the correct year and might instead be 1827.

I was twelve years old when we left Drummond Island. I came in a bateau with my mother, brother, sister, and an Indian, named Gro-e-wis-Oge-nier, and his wife. We were two weeks coming. Several families started together in sail-boats, bateaux and canoes. We camped at Thessalon River, Mississaga River, Serpent River, LaCloche, She-bon-aw-ning,* Moose Point and other places on the way. We stopped at Pinery Point and made our toilet before entering Penetanguishene Bay. We landed at the Reformatory Point. We were all looking for the place where we expected to see the sand rolling over and over down the hill (Osborne, 1901: 138).

Rosette Boucher (née Larammée) in her narrative to Osborne described her trip with a party consisting of three families and fifteen people all together, thus:

We left Drummond Island in April, 1828, and were in the sugar camp when some of the others started. The Labattes left before the soldiers. We came in a large bateau with two other families and a span of horses. [...] We came by the North Shore, and were one month on the way. We camped at Mississaga Point, McBean's Post, La Cloche, She-bon-an-ning, Moose Point and
Minniekaignashene, the last camping-place before reaching Penetanguishene (Osborne, 1901: 140-141).

In his narrative, Jean-Baptiste Sylvestre (born in 1813) states that when he and his father:

[...] arrived at Penetanguishene Bay the Drummond Islanders were camped on Barrack's Point, in wigwams made of poles covered with cedar bark. My father traded with Gordon, who settled on Penetanguishene Bay long before the troops moved from Drummond Island. William Beausoleil came before him and settled on Beausoleil Island (Osborne, 1901: 142-143).

Angélique Langlade, the daughter of Charles Langlade senior, recounts that her family, her two parents, three brothers and three sisters travelled from Drummond Island by bateau from the North shore a year before the soldiers, which would be 1827. They arrived at Gordon’s Point, made a wigwam of cedar bark and waited to receive their 20 acre lot where they settled (Osborne, 1901: 147).

It seems clear that the hastily and ill-prepared removal put the displaced population in an unenviable situation. The following year, in June of 1829, Lieutenant John Impett, commander of the Penetanguishene garrison felt compelled to write Commissary General Routh to ask permission to help the new settlers:

[...] many of the Settlers who have arrived here from Drummond Island are in great distress owing to the scarcity of provisions and the difficulty of obtaining any supply at this Post. I would therefore take the liberty of suggesting that it would be of great advantage to these people if you would be pleased to authorise a portion of Bread and Pork to be issued to them, at the usual Contract price, until their present difficulties are in some degree removed (Impett, PAC, 1829).

This request did illicit a favourable response from the Commissariat, as shown in the letter quoted below by R. I. Routh, but to what extent it was of any help to the Métis and others trying to settle in Penetanguishene remains unknown.

[...] being witness myself of the great distress of these unfortunate Refugees from Drummond Island I took it upon myself subject to His Excellency’s approval to authorise the Commissariat Officer to issue to these individuals to the extent of half a dozen Barrels of Flour on payment of the Contract price, subject to His Excellency’s pleasure, and as I have no report of such issue having yet been made, probably from their inability to pay even this Cost I request you will communicate to me the instructions of the Commander of the Forces for my guidance.

The cost of flour at Penetanguishene was double the amount of the Contract price (Routh, PAC, 1829).

It remains difficult to ascertain exactly how many individuals and families moved to Penetanguishene during the 1820s and where all of them resided and for how long. The estimates vary. For instance A. C. Osborne states that:
The voyageurs on the island, some seventy-five families, soon followed the garrison, moving to the neighborhood of the new post at Penetanguishene, the majority during the same and following years. In the wise provision of a paternal Government they were granted, in lieu of their abandoned homes, liberal allotments of lands on the borders of Penetanguishene Bay. Here they settled on twenty-acre and forty-acre lots, of which they became the original owners and patentees from the Crown in what are known as the Town and Ordnance Surveys (Osborne, 1901: 124).

However, Lewis Solomon places the number of families from Drummond Island even higher.

St. Onge dit La Tard, Chevrette, Boyer, Coté, Cadieux, Desaulniers, Lacourse, Lepine, Lacroix, Rushloe, Precourt, Desmaisons and Fleury, a Spaniard, all came from Drummond Island. Altogether (in Louie's opinion) about one hundred families came (Osborne, 1901: 137).

Gwen Patterson describes the group moving from Drummond Island as a distinct group:

The civilian population from Drummond Island included numerous volunteer veterans of the War of 1812, having fought in the initial attack and conquest of Michilimackinac in July 1812 and in the “last battle” of the War at Prairie du Chien in 1814. These men were awarded Military Park Lots, of twenty acres each, on the north shore of Penetang Bay. Many of these men had Aboriginal wives and racially mixed children.

Even though there was a military component to the Drummond Islanders, they are a distinct migration population. Combining both French Canadian and Aboriginal heritage, these families were different from the military and certainly from the next migration group to arrive (Patterson, 2005: 5-6).

The relationship between the military and the displaced civilian population would continue, as Patrick Folkes writes:

Notwithstanding those early difficulties, the Drummond Island civilians formed the nucleus of the village of Penetanguishene. The close relationship which existed on the Island between the civil and military populations was continued on Penetanguishene Bay. Both the new hamlet and the military establishment owed their existence to the British withdrawal from northern Lake Huron (Folkes, 1980: 64-65).

The Surveyor General Office Map of June 8, 1830 Penetanguishene (see Map 4, p. 47) shows that at the outset, there were 43 land grants along the reserve on the west side of Penetanguishene Bay (see Appendix 1). Of the 43 grantees included in the 1830, many were Métis or married to Métis or First Nation women, such as Pierre Giroux, George Gordon, Charles Langlade senior, Charles Langlade junior, William Solomon, Henry Solomon, Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, André Vasseur and Charles Vasseur. Other Métis or men married to Métis or First Nation women received free grants elsewhere in Tiny Township, such as Louis George Labatte and James Farling.
Map 4: Surveyor General Office Map of June 8, 1830 Penetanguishene

*Source: Public Archives of Canada. RG 5, Civil Secretary's Correspondence. Upper Canada Sundries, A1, Vol. 100, no. 2/C-6870.*
Many historians or others writing about these land grants mention that they were given for services rendered during the War of 1812. Although this is true in some cases, an examination of the Ontario Land Records Index ca. 1780 – ca. 1920 shows that it is seems to have been the case for a limited number of them. In a search of the Ontario Lands Records Index for the names of 40 individuals with probable Métis connections, 26 were found. Eleven of these men have their grant listed as Free Grant Military/Militia. The other lots are designated as “Full Fees, all administrative costs paid by locatee” (see Appendix 2).

As we ascertained in our previous work, the list of landowners in Tiny Township in 1834 and 1835, includes 73 with voyageur surnames (Marchand, 1989: 38 and 95-98).

As well, not all of the Drummond Island Métis and voyageurs settled around Penetanguishene Bay. Lewis Solomon notes that:

> H. Fortin, Thibault, Quebec, Rondeau and St. Amand, all French-Canadians from Red River and Drummond Island, settled at the old fort on the Wye [river] (Osborne, 1901: 131).

Also, the Métis family of Louis George Labatte, by a strange twist of fate ended up settling down at Thunder Bay beach as recounted by Antoine Labatte (half-brother of Michel).

We left Penetanguishene in 1834, to go to Meaford to take up land received for Government service. We were in a bateau with our goods and provisions, being towed by the steamer Penetanguishene [...] A heavy storm arose before we reached Christian Island. Our bateau smashed the back windows of the cabin of the little steamer, and one of the lines broke by which we were being towed. We were driven on Christian Island, near where the lighthouse stands. After a little time the captain thought he would try again, and my father refused to go. We were obliged to unload the bateau, as it belonged to the steamer. We unloaded our goods and blacksmith's tools into a birch canoe, while they started the second time for the Blue Mountains, but were obliged to return. We camped there about a week. There were no Indians there then. When the storm ceased [...] Antoine Lacourse, a fisherman from Penetanguishene, and some friends, came to take us back to Penetanguishene. We started, but the ice was so thick it took three men with sticks in the front of the bateau to break it. We got as far as Thunder Bay (Tiny), and landed at a fisherman's cabin, but twelve feet square, where we stayed for the night, with fifteen men, besides eight of our own family. We built a place to winter in, then built a log house, and lived on the bay ever since. The old house is still standing. Tontine Martin, a fisherman from Penetanguishene, built a small cabin just before we came, but occupied it only temporarily. Camile Giroux was the next settler, about twenty years after we came (Osborne, 1901: 145).

The reasons that motivate the Métis to move to Penetanguishene are perhaps more complex than those presented by historians in the past. They have been presented as related to the land grants. However, if there were 75 families that took part in the move, only half of them, or 40 received land. For the other half, then, they did not move to receive land. Perhaps they were seeking out economic opportunities which they hoped they could take advantage of by being close
to the Military and Naval establishments in Penetanguishene. They might have recognized that the fur trade was undergoing a decline and were looking for other options.

For those that did receive land, there seems to have been much dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of these grants.

As early as 1815, Robert Gourlay notes that elsewhere in Upper Canada there are two fairly large groups of citizens complaining about the distribution of land: on the one hand, those that lost land during the War of 1812 and, on the other, militiamen that have yet to receive land promised by the government as a reward for their services (ORN 1). It would seem that the voyageurs can count themselves as lucky to have received land, although this luck appears limited when their 20 acre lots are compared to the 200 acre lots granted to ordinary settlers in 1815 (ORN 2: Marchand, 1989: 37) (Our translation).

Original French:
Pourant, dès 1815, Robert Gourlay rapporte qu’ailleurs dans le Haut-Canada, deux groupes de citoyens assez nombreux se plaignent au sujet de la distribution des terres: d’une part, les gens ayant perdu des lots lors de la guerre de 1812 et, d’autre part, les miliciens n’ayant pas reçu de terre en récompense de leurs services selon la promesse du gouvernement (1). Il semble donc que les voyageurs peuvent se compter chanceux d’avoir reçu des terres, quoique leur chance soit plutôt limitée si l’on compare leurs octrois de vingt acres à ceux de deux cents acres accordés par le gouvernement au colon ordinaire en 1815 (2).

There seems to have been a divergence of opinion as to the value of the land granted to the voyageurs. Although, A. C. Osborne, refers to these lots as “liberal allotments of lands” others point out that: “[...] those that have seen these « liberal allotments of lands » know that they consisted in liberal allotments of sand and rocks” (Marchildon, 1945: 39). (Our translation).

Original French:
[..] ceux qui ont vu de leurs yeux ces “généreuses concessions de terrains” savent qu’elles consistaient généreusement en sable, en cailloux.

The voyageur and Métis grantees were quick to complain about the conditions surrounding their grants and the quality of the land, as shown in a series of petitions they submitted to the government, as early as this one in August, 1830.

The Petition of the Inhabitants of the town of Penetanguishene and of the occupiers of the Twenty acre lots on the opposite side of the Bay - Humbly sheweth

That when the Town lots and Twenty acre lots were granted them by your Excellency, they considered them to be free grants, or rather in remuneration for the losses they sustained by being obliged to relinquish the property they held on Drummond Island.

That they are now told they cannot have the Deeds for their several lots without paying the sum of eight pounds for each.

That most of your petitioners are not able to pay the required sum and must in consequence after all the trouble and expense they have incurred be obliged to relinquish them, which they need not inform your Excellency
would be a great hardship, for had they known their liability to such a
charge they would not have taken possession of their several lots.

Your petitioners further beg leave to state to your Excellency that those of
them who hold the twenty acre lots are generally poor men, that they are
under an obligation to clear four acres of and build a house on each lot
during the first year, and clear four acres yearly during the three following
years.

That most of your petitioners are obliged to go out to daily labour to acquire
the means of performing the settling duties for the first year and that if they
should be obliged to clear four acres yearly in the three subsequent years, it
will be quite impossible for them to cultivate them, and that after they clear
the sixteen acres, there will be only four acres left for fuel which will soon
be expended.

Your petitioners beg also to state that many of those who have taken twenty
acre lots in the second and third concessions find the land so bad that it is
not worth cultivating.

Under these circumstances your Petitioners Humbly pray that they may not
be under an obligation to pay anything for their deeds as they considered at
the time of taking them that they were free grants and that the settlement
duties upon the twenty acre lots may be reduced to eight acres (Petition
August 1830, PAC, 1830, pages 57655-58).

This petition was signed by the 43 grantees, of which at least seven can be identified as Métis. The three main grievances, the obligation to clear four acres per year that should be reduced to a total of eight acres, the obligation to pay eight pounds to register their deeds and the poor quality of the land do not seem to have been addressed. In the Ontario Land Records index, 18 of the 43 park lots, excluding those free grants for military services, are indicated as “Full Fees” meaning all administrative costs paid by locatee.

Another petition submitted to John Colborne, in May of 1832, in French, asks the
Governor to consider granting them additional lands.

[...] they humbly dare to submit to his Excellency that such a small quantity
of land is insufficient to give them the means to raise their children. Nearly
all are the fathers of large families. When they came here
[Penetanguishene] they left behind the limited means they had in the place
they left [Drummond Island], and are, in general, without any means but the
common labour they can perform with their hands. Most of them have three
times sacrificed their property to follow the banner of their country, that is to
say from St. Joseph Island to Mackinac Island and from the latter to
Drummond Island, and finally from there to this place where they currently
reside. All these various displacements did not take place without
compromising their meagre resources. But they have always been happy to
move in order to conserve their beautiful title of British subject.
[...] that it would please your Excellency to give them in guarantee a greater
quantity of land than that which they received from Him. They do not have
the audacity to suggest to you a quantity, but allow themselves to humbly indicate that they are all able to clear and cultivate 100 acres of land (Petition 1832). (Our translation).

Original French:
[...] ils osent humblement présenter à votre Excellence qu'une si petite quantité de terre est insuffisante pour pouvoir leur procurer les moyens d'élever leurs enfants. Presque tous sont père d'une nombreuse famille. Ils ont en venant ici abandonné le peu de moyens qu’ils avaient dans le lieu qu’ils ont quittés, et sont en général sans autre fortune que le travail journalier de leurs mains. La plus grande partie parmi eux ont trois fois sacrifié leur propriété pour suivre le pavillon de leur nation, savoir de l’île Saint-Joseph à l’île Mackinac, de cette dernière à l’île Drummond et enfin de celle-ci au lieu où ils habitent présentement. Tous ces divers déplacements n’ont pu avoir lieu sans obérer leurs faibles moyens. Mais ils l’ont toujours fait avec joie parce qu’ils conservent le beau titre de sujet britannique. [...] qu’il vous plaise leur donner en garant une plus grande quantité de terre que celle qu’ils ont reçu de votre Excellence. Ils n’ont pas la hardiesse de vous fixer la quantité, mais se permettent humblement de vous représenter qu’ils sont tous en état de faire valoir et cultiver cent arpents de terre.

This petition (undoubtedly written by Dédin Révol) is signed by 22 individuals, for the most part the same names that are on the lots on the 1830 Surveyor General’s map and “includes names of individuals who are known to be métis (eg., Charles Langlade), French-Canadian’s born in Lower Canada but married to Indian or métis women (eg., L.G. Labatte), and Scotch/British men also married to Indian or métis women (eg., George Gordon) (Doc. #3)” (Praxis, 2000: 98). It is interesting to note that the petitioners believe that 100 acres, five times their original grant, would be better suited to ensuring their livelihood.

The same year, another petition was sent to the government asking for more land.

In October 1832, a petition was sent to Major Winniot at York from former Drummond Islanders requesting land grants at Penetanguishene. The petitioners address themselves as “We the Canadian Inhabitants of Penetanguishene, lately from Drummond Island...” (Doc. #5). Unfortunately this petition does not have a list of names attached and the significance of the self ascription, “Canadian Inhabitants”, is unknown. (Praxis, 2000: 98).

In a petition dated March 8, 1833, in French, presented to the Governor of Upper Canada, John Colborne, the 25 signatories, that include the voyageurs and Métis owners of the park lot grants, react to a petition presented to the Governor in July of 1830 requesting that the town of Penetanguishene be moved closer to the Naval and Military establishment. In it they complain of their limited means.

We take the liberty of humbly drawing to your Excellency’s attention that should he grant this request, that is the wish of but a few persons, it would indubitably ruin the inhabitants of this place. In general, we are all individuals with little in the way of money. We have all exhausted ourselves to build here; and very few would have the means of finding the funds necessary to relocate themselves. Maybe one or two might gain an advantage from moving, but the people in general would be ruined (Petition 1833, PAC, pages 69879-81). (Our translation)

Original French:
Nous nous permettons de représenter humblement à votre Excellence que si vous souscrivez à cette réclamation qui n’est en effet que le voeu de quelques personnes, cela ruinerait indubitablement les habitants de ce lieu. Tous pour la généralité nous sommes des individus de peu de fortune. Tous se sont épuisés pour se bâtir ici ; et bien peu seraient
Two people sent individual requests to the government for additional compensation, in the form of land, for the losses suffered by the move from Drummond Island: Pierre Giroux senior, and S. Rawson (ORN 9, 10, 11: Marchand, 1989: 39).

The grantees obviously did clear parts of their land as attest the following excerpts taken from an 1836 article written by an officer stationed at Penetanguishene.

In the distance on the E. Shore is seen the small village of Penetang, pleasingly seated on the slope of a gradually ascending hill, surrounded on all sides, except the West, by a dense growth of forest trees. Immediately opposite to the village are settlements of French Canadian families, (formerly from Drummond Island) who, in some instances, have cleared to the very summit of the high land which borders the bay. [...] 

The whole of the west side of the Bay is in its primitive state of uncleared forest, with the exception of the few settlements just alluded to. On the E. side of the harbour, the land has been cleared to the summit of the hill for many years past, and is studded with many pleasant looking cottages chiefly inhabited by the officers of the garrison. [...] 

The village, which is quite in its infant state, consists of about 20 dwellings, and a small log-built Catholic chapel. Among the houses are two or three very excellent frame built tenements: with two or three stores, an inn, blacksmith, tinsmith and post office. The mail from Toronto arrives every Friday and goes out the following Monday night; the remaining houses are in general miserable log huts. The fact is this village has not, as our American friends would say, “progressed” in the same ratio as other settlements of equal standing, although situated in the shores of such a noble harbour: but certainly so it is, that during the last two years, scarcely any improvement has appeared. [...] 

The houses within the vicinity of the garrison are 18 in number scattered along a ridge of a mile in length, and occupied entirely with the military, with the exception of two or three families near a small tavern kept by a Mr. Wallace [...] (Ingall, 1836: 5-9).

In order to retain their land grants, the grantees had to meet the settlement requirements. At least some of them were able to do so and obtain title. At the meeting of the Executive Council Chamber at Toronto on Monday, June 30, 1834, 25 landowners (voyageurs and at least 3 Métis, 2 Vasseur, 1 Laronde) were awarded title to their lands as “persons who have performed the settlement duties on this location on this Town and Park Lots at Penetanguishene and entitled to their patent deeds” (Upper Canada, PAC: 445-446); (see Appendix 3).

The requests for more land grants seem to have fallen on deaf ears, since in 1842, John Moberly, in writing about the lots on the west side of Penetanguishene Bay, states that: “At present the only settlers are a few merchants and some Canadians from Drummond Island on 20 acre lots, all poor” (ORN 12, quoted in Marchand, 1989: 39).
Not all the Métis or voyageurs who were granted lots would keep them. Those that didn’t may have lost them because they didn’t fulfill the settler’s duty of clearing a portion of the land within the first four years, or may not have been able to pay the taxes on the land. Of those who did occupy and retain their lots, not all of them passed them on to their successors. A map dated 1861 (Crown Lands Office, 1861) shows 31 of the 43 original landowners, several of which are Métis, still in possession of their lots.

All the petitions quoted above would seem indicative of Métis self-identification as Reimer and Chartrand point out.

[...] in the Penetanguishene area, several petitions for land grants indicate Métis self-identity as early as the 1830s (Reimer, 2004: 581).

They go on to state that:

[...] geographical proximity might be critical to the development of a political consciousness among a group of Métis compelled to take collective action toward common goals or against common threats (Reimer, 2004: 596).

Over the course of the next fifty years, many of the surnames associated with the original Métis and voyageur settlers would appear in documents describing the Penetanguishene area. For instance, Osborne lists:

Tiny settlers before 1837
Cuthbert Amiotte, (Amyot), Con. 15, S. half Lot 16; James Bowden, Con. 1, S. half Lot 80; Mrs. Crawford, Con. 1, Lot 100; Louis DeCheneault, Con. 16; Lot 16; Louis Desaulniers, Con 15, Lot 13; Robert Jeffs, Con. 1, Lot 95; Louis G. Labatte, Con. 17, s. half Lot 16; Thomas Landrigan, Con. 2, Lot 107; Edward McDonald, Con. 1, Lot 114.

Tay settlers before 1837

The 1837 Gazetteer of Toronto and the Home District noted, for 1832, that Tiny and Tay townships had a total population of 765, with 186 Males above 16, 196 Males under 16, and 383 Females. A total of 54 residents are listed and these include many of the original Métis and voyageur settlers of Penetanguishene (Walton, 1843: 178-179) (see Appendix 4).

The 1846 Canadian Gazetteer described Penetanguishene and Tiny thus: “With the exception of the settlers in the village of Penetanguishene, the inhabitants are principally half French half Indian. [...] Population in 1842, 230” (Smith, 1846: 192). In 1851, an article states that:

The population of the village and surrounding country is about 500. It has not increased much since the first settlement, owing to the lessoning of the fur trade and other causes (Barrie Magnet, 1851).
Despite an increase in population, Simcoe County and the Penetanguishene area did not develop rapidly. As W.W. Fieguth writes, the County population increased to almost 4,000 in 1837 and to nearly 10,000 by 1851 but at that time: “[...] still only 4.5% of the total and 24% of the occupied area were reported as improved” (Fieguth, 1968: 21).

A correspondent from 1855 had this negative perception of Penetanguishene and its Métis population.

 [...] this place beats all nater as Slick (3) says. It is between 30 & 40 miles north of Barrie near Georgean (sic) Bay, and is said to contain 600 inhabitants (where they hide themselves I do not know) One Eng. and one Popish Church – two Inns and no school of any kind english or french. We have four Stores (one kept by Coln. Thompson’s two Sons) (4) and another by an Englishman. With these two exceptions and a few pensioners somewhere out in the woods & the parson & doctor, all the rest are either french, french canadians, or half breeds. We have the wild savage indians with rings in their ears and noses, feathers on their head and their faces painted vermillion red, such as I never saw before only in pictures, and we have the tamed ones such as are in your parts, and the half breeds - that is half french and half indian. French men have married squaws and Indians have married french women, all mixed up in glorious confusion, and all speaking either french or indian. Very seldom I hear the English language except two men on my own staff. Even the Eng. speak french in common. I never was in such a place in my life, and if I live to get to Barrie again, hope I never shall be in such a place again. But oh! the flies here! They are are (sic) worse than as many russian (5) riflemen. While I am writing or adjusting the Theodolite I have often to get two men with bushes one each side to keep them off, and even then they drive me almost to desperation. The black flies are the chaps. I never saw any of them before. We come home almost every night in a gore of blood, hands, neck, face and legs covered with sores and great lumps. Just as well we were in a fire!! I have a much tougher time than when I was at the hic, haec, hocs (6) with the boys in Springfield, but yet I feel better here than there, and I think I weigh heavier now than I did then (Sanders, 1855: 9).

An 1869 Directory for the Province of Ontario, alludes to the composition of the population in Penetanguishene. “The population consists in a great measure of French Canadians and half-breeds. [...] A large trade is carried on here” (McEvoy, 1869: 594). In the Gazetteer for 1872-73, the population of Penetanguishene is presented as being about 600 (Gazetteer 1872-3: 129).

The voyageurs and Métis that evolved in the Mackinac straits area and then on Drummond Island, far away from White social and religious institutions, developed their own form of society. But, over time, life in Penetanguishene would force them to adapt to a changing economy and the proximity of White society (Marchand, 1989: 24).

Ontario historian Gaétan Gervais comments on the unique nature of the community that takes shape in Penetanguishene after the important changes in the fur trade.

When the fur trade disappeared from the Saint Lawrence, in 1821, some former voyageurs established themselves as a group in certain areas along the Ottawa River, opposite Fort-Coulounge (Quebec). But the most significant group of voyageurs that an attempt was made to try and convert
into farmers was that in Penetanguishene, in 1828. [...] the Penetanguishene settlement is the only instance in Ontario where a significant number of voyageurs accepted land grants and tried to form a settlement (Marchand, 1989: 4). (Our translation)

Original French:
Quand le commerce de la fourrure disparut du Saint-Laurent, en 1821, certains anciens voyageurs se fixèrent en groupe dans certaines régions de la rivière des Outaouais, en face de Fort-Coulange (Québec). Mais le groupe de voyageurs le plus important qu’on ait tenté de transformer en agriculteurs est celui de Penetanguishene, en 1828. [...] Or le peuplement de Penetanguishene est le seul cas, en Ontario, où un nombre significatif de voyageurs ait pris des terres et tenté de faire ensemble un peuplement.

The Métis community in Penetanguishene forms a locale.

[...] at Penetanguishene, Métis are described as living in a specific locale following their migration from Drummond Island in 1828. A published travel journal by Elmes Henderson from 1856 includes a description of a French settlement situated west of Penetanguishene, a “little village called the French Settlement”, inhabited by “French-Canadians and half-breeds” (Henderson 1932 [1856]: 31). The geographic location described by Henderson was probably the Military Reserve, a strip of land along the western shoreline of Penetanguishene Bay where voyageurs were granted lots by the military as part of a strategy to secure and defend the bay in case of attack. Although it appears that the voyageurs did not initiate the development of a distinct geographic locale within the greater Penetanguishene settlement, it appears that this civilian settlement soon became associated with a French Canadian voyageur/Métis community in social, cultural, linguistic, and occupational terms. Of significance to the latter, Henderson also noted that the French Settlement “supplied guides, trappers, boat-men and canoe-men for the various tourists and surveyors engaged in opening up the then unknown back country, and when not so occupied, built boats and canoes and did some fishing on their own account” (Ibid.; cf. Jury and Jury 1959: 44) (Reimer, 2004: 591-592).

The Métis and voyageurs thus distinguish themselves from the French-Canadians culturally and socially and undergo a transition from a fur trade economy to a lumber based one (Marchand, 1989: 9).

3.3 Land issues sparked by the Métis

In the late 1840s the Crown started to feel the necessity to settle questions involving land titles along the north shore of Lake Huron including Georgian Bay. Lieutenant Harper, commanding the ship Experiment, submitted a report dated September 1, 1845 from Penetanguishene on the subject. This report was commented on by Captain T.G. Anderson of the Indian Department on September 25, 1845. It contained an extract of Harper’s report that concluded that:

[...] not one individual on the British side [of Lake Huron], with the sole exception of the Hudson Bay Company own one foot of soil or land; their [the Métis inhabitants] Houses are built and their little gardens planted under
the fear that they may be ordered off at any moment and lose all - no title deeds can be got as the Indians here claim the land and the Government, I am told has not yet admitted their claim to it. The present occupants therefore have no interest in the soil, nor any inducement to cultivate or improve an acre of it, although they say it is much better land than on the American side, and would produce much more. Were it possible, Sir, to give these poor people a personal and permanent interest in the land they occupy, and a chance of obtaining more, I feel assured that it would be of vast benefit to that vicinity, and fix (what I believe to be) a loyal population on our frontier (Anderson, PAC, 1845: pages 87759-87760).

In his comments, Anderson responded that:

The Indian title to the lands on the North Shores of Lake Huron on the route from Penetanguishene to the Sault Ste Marie inclusive has never been extinguished, and from the circumstance of many new Chiefs being created in times past and the original claimants either dying or removing to other Tribes, it is rendered a difficult matter to ascertain which are the true descendants from the Old Stock, therefore it would not be easy to find the real proprietors of any particular Section of the Country, as some would most probably claim that part on which others now live. But the lands alluded to belong to the Chippewas residing on the American as well as the British side of the water in the vicinity of Saint Marie. [...]

The poor Canadian and half breed settlers who are not very numerous may be termed squatters as many of them located themselves without other authority than a permission from the natives who, notwithstanding the Territory is said to be theirs cannot sell or give a title to any but the British Government; others of them applied for and received from different Commanding Officers at Saint Josephs (sic) and Drummond Island a permit to occupy a certain parcel of land by which permission they felt themselves thus far secure.... They considered and in fact it was promised them that when the Government should extinguish the Indian title they would have a preemption right and their claim be confirmed by the Government. [...]

I was sent by the Lieut. governor (now Lord Seaton) I think in 1835 to treat with these squatters and endeavor to get them removed with a view in compliance with the request of the Indians, to establish an Indian Mission at that spot. I was directed to offer them Lands on the Island of St Joseph or a fair valuation in money for their little improvements. The former they would not hear of, and as to the latter, the prices they asked were so far beyond what I considered to be their value, that the idea of their removal was abandoned. This shows they did not, at that time consider their claims as held on slight grounds. [...]

Though they are Christians in name, Religion has little influence on their morals. There is no appearance of comfort about their dwellings or persons. Their offspring are allowed as it were to run wild and uncontrolled without example of industry or care for their instruction.
The most simple way to benefit them in my opinion would be for the Government to insure that whenever the land is purchased they shall have their Deeds, and permit them to cut wild hay and a limited quantity of wood (Anderson, PAC, 1845: 87756-87758).

Anderson’s comments were received and discussed by a Committee of the executive council on October 10, 1845 and this committee recommended to the Governor General that he:

[...] adopt such measures as may seem just and proper for the extension of the authority of the Government over that part of the Province bordering on the north shore of Lake Huron [...] (Committee, PAC, 1845: 87762-87763).

This was to be followed by the Mica Bay Incident and the Robinson Treaties of 1850.

It [the Mica Bay Incident] involved a band of Indians and Métis, led by the white entrepreneur Allan Macdonell. The group travelled from Sault Ste. Marie along the shore of Lake Superior for about 200 miles to Mica Bay, and there, in November, 1849, attacked the mining installations of the Quebec Mining Company. This attack by an armed force (estimates of the numbers involved vary from 30 to 100) inclined the company agent, John Bonner, to surrender without resistance. The government was sufficiently alarmed to send a force of 100 rifles to suppress this “Indian uprising” ORN 13: The phrase was used in the Toronto Globe, November 22, 1849: Surtee, 1986).

This incident finally pushed the Crown to send W. B. Robinson to Sault Ste. Marie in order to negotiate the two agreements that were to take his name, the Robinson Treaties of 1850. The effects on the status of the Métis would be significant.

Through these two agreements signed in September of 1850 at Sault Ste. Marie, W.B. Robinson secured virtually the whole of the Upper Canadian northwest for government use. Generally referred to as the Robinson-Huron Treaty, the agreement of September 9th [1850] called for the cession of the Lake Huron shoreline, including the islands, from Matchedash Bay to Batchewans Bay, and inland as far as the height of land. [...] 

The Robinson Treaties contained significant clauses regarding three other features of Indian-white relations: the questions of mineral rights, the rights of half-breeds, and hunting and fishing rights. [...] 

Another consideration which grew from this stipulation in these agreements was the issue of half-breed rights, which was raised by the Indians both with the Vidal-Anderson commission and with Robinson. If the bands were forbidden from selling or leasing their land, could they give it to the half breeds by permitting persons of mixed blood to join the band and/or share in the annuity money? Robinson suggested that this could be done. The matter was resolved by requiring that half-breeds declare themselves as either Indian or non Indian. It could be argued that by requiring this choice, the
government effectively prevented the development of Métis communities in Ontario similar to those that grew in Western Canada. [...] 

The claim would be repeatedly raised over the decades until the investigations and negotiations surrounding the Williams Treaty of 1923 established the rights of the Lake Simcoe Chippewa bands to the lands laying north and east of their village. In order to clarify this situation, the shoreline between Matchedash Bay and the French River, inland to the height of land, was included in the 1923 arrangements (ORN 19: Leo Johnson, History of the County of Ontario, Whitby, 1973, pp. 27-37, in Surtee, 1986).

As noted, the treaty included a large tract of land that encompassed areas frequented and lived in by the Métis of Georgian Bay.

The Robinson-Huron treaty specifically covered an area delimited to and including:

...Penetanguishene to Sault Ste. Marie, and thence to Batchewanaung [sic] Bay, on the northern shores of Lake Superior, together with the Islands of the said Lakes, opposite to the shores thereof, and inland to the height of land which separates the territory covered by the charter of the Honourable Hudson’s Bay Company from Canada... (Morris, 1991: 305 and Praxis, 2000: 67-68).

There was at that time according to a census of the Aboriginal population living in geographical areas to be covered by the treaty about fourteen hundred and twenty-two aboriginals, including probably two hundred half-breeds (Praxis, 2000: 68).

Thus, the First Nations ceded most of the territory between Sault Ste. Marie and Penetanguishene, and the Métis were forced to choose between being either White or First Nation. Ultimately, this also entailed an end to the ambivalent squatter status and encouraged Upper Great Lakes Métis to become land owners, a measure of effective control.

Although the Mica Bay incident is considered the catalyst for the Robinson Treaties, it seems clear that land titles issues related to the Métis as early as 1845 were already pushing the government in this direction.

3.4 Métis collective action in Penetanguishene

The first Métis and voyageurs settlers in the Penetanguishene area did not limit themselves to the Park lots granted to them on the west side of Penetanguishene Bay. Louis Deschenaux built the first house on a lot in the 16th concession of Tiny in 1830, where the future village of Lafontaine would take shape. Joseph Messier built a second house on the next lot, and others, Jean Lacroix, Cyril Pombert, and Jean Thibault followed (Marchand, 1989: 80, and Osborne, 1901: 139). Starting in the late 1840s these first settlers would soon find themselves gradually surrounded by a number of French-Canadian settlers from Lower Canada.

In a personal journal about his years in Penetanguishene in the late 1830s and early 1840s, William Basil Hamilton describes the settlement as he saw it for the first time.

[...] about this time Mr. Andrew Mitchell (ORN 3) a brother of my father's first wife who when the garrison on Drummond island was surrendered to the Americans came with the British troops and the other inhabitants to
settle at Penetanguishene set up a store and fur trading establishment engaged me as a clerk. I then left my sister and went to the new village three miles off at that time there were not more than half a dozen houses in the village and these very small, with the exception of Mr. A. Mitchells frame building the others were built of cedar logs covered with bark made warm by stuffing moss between the logs. Mr. Mitchell had also a brother an officer on half pay with their father Dr. Mitchell (ORN 4) who was also an anuitant in the Indian Department, these with a Mr. Simpson (ORN 5) another merchant were the only english (sic) speaking inhabitants the others were French Canadians and half breeds, the village was surrounded with woods in every direction [...] (Hamilton, 1983: 27).

Reimer notes on the subject of Hamilton’s description of the Métis:

W. B. Hamilton—an independent fur trader and lumber merchant at Penetanguishene from the 1820s to the 1850s—distinguishes between voyageur as an occupational designation and Halfbreed as a racial designation, although in many cases these terms refer to the same individual (French, 1983). [...] In his account of a journey with Colonel Jarvis in the 1840s, Hamilton describes the steersman of the canoe as “a half breed... the only real voyageur we had for our Crew the others French Canadians though good for paddling had not much experience otherwise” (Ibid.:37)” (Reimer, 2004: 599).

Paul Kane, in his travel journal Wanderings of an Artist, mentions the Penetanguishene Métis community:

I left Toronto on the 17th of June 1845 [...] Penetanguishene [...] There is a small naval depôt here, and a steamer [...] Besides this depôt, there is a village inhabited by a few whites and half-breeds (Croft, 2001: 279).

The presence of the Métis and voyageurs marked the landscape not only physically but topographically as well. As mentioned by Lewis Solomon, the points on the west side of Penetanguishene harbour originally took on their names (see Map 5, p. 61).

Highland Point (now Davidson's Point), was called Lavallee's Point; the next point east was called Trudeau Point, after the blacksmith; the next point east, now called "Wait a Bit", was named Giroux Point, formerly called Beausoleil Point; next was Mischeau's Point; next, Corbiere's Point all named after Drummond Islanders (Osborne, 1901: 131).

Most of these names have not survived and have been replaced with English names, with the exception of Michaud Point and Trudeau Point, the latter only being used on certain charts.
Map 5: Historic Métis and voyageur place names in Penetanguishene Bay
A petition of “the undersigned half breeds residing in the Town of Penetanguishene” to the Governor General, dated January 27, 1840, presents evidence of the Métis collectively organizing and claiming rights based on their status. The text of the petition reads:

The petition of the undersigned half breeds residing in the Town of Penetanguishene, humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners, have always proved themselves, to be good and loyal Subjects, and a number of them when Call’d upon, have served in the Militia, and will always be ready at any Call when their services may again be required.

That your Petitioners are generally speaking, in poor circumstances, and that they do not share in any advantage in presents issued to the Indians as a number of the half breeds, from the Sault St. Marie (sic) and other places on the shores of Lake Huron have done for the last two years.

Therefore your Petitioners most humbly beg your Excellency will take their case under your Excellency's consideration and that your Excellency would be pleased to allow them to have the same advantages that persons of the same class (living at the Sault St. Marie (sic) and other places on the shores of Lake Huron), derive from the issue of Indian presents to them and their families (Petition 1840, PAC: 67089-67090).


The petition is important in that it shows the Penetanguishene Métis acting separately from the voyageurs, with whom they had signed other petitions previously, on an issue that concerned them specifically. It is also interesting to note that some of those that signed the petition, (like Jean-Baptiste Trudeau) although not born Métis had married First Nation or Métis women and lived in the Upper Great Lakes among the Métis long enough to have adopted their lifestyle and consider themselves as part of the half-breed or Métis group.

Finally, the petition shows that the Métis see themselves as a distinct “class” of people separate from the First Nations but entitled to “the advantage in presents issued to the Indians” in view of their “poor circumstances” and proven loyalty to the Crown as part of the Militia. Michel Labatte (Osborne, 1901: 138) and several other Métis had participated in the militia, notably during the 1837 Rebellion.

Indian Officer, Samuel Jarvis, in commenting this petition a month later on February 1, 1840, recognized the special status of the Métis and spoke in favour of changing the Crown’s policy to allow them to receive presents. He stated that:

The determination to withhold the presents from this class of Indians, was I believe first acted upon during the administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland—but I can find no official order or instruction to that effect recorded in the Indian office addressed to any officer of the Indian
department—and I apprehend that there never was anything more than a
mere verbal communication on the subject made to Captain Anderson under
whose charge a great number of them about this time were.

This design was clearly to discourage the intermarriage of French Canadians
or other white men with Indian women—it being the opinion of many
persons that such intermarriage had a demoralizing effect on the Indian
character and retarded their civilization.

I am however of a different opinion. From personal observation, I am
induced to think that most if not all the Indian women married to white men
and particularly those married to French Canadians have adopted in a great
measure the social manners and habits of their husbands and strictly apply
themselves to domestic and household duties (Jarvis, 1840).

He noted also, however, that both the Métis and the First Nations had advocated strongly for
this measure. In particular he described how the Métis in Penetanguishene had been forceful in their
claims.

Upon every occasion that I have visited the Lake Huron tribes an appeal has
been made to me to remove? the disability imposed upon the Class of Half-
Breeds not only by the elder members of the Indian Communities but also by
the Half-Breeds themselves this decision of government being by them
considered harsh and unjust. In July last [1839] when at Penetanguishene a
number of them surrounded the house I was in, for this purpose claiming and
insisting upon having that which they asserted? was their right, as long as
the distribution of presents to Indians was continued by government.

In August following a similar appeal was made on their behalf by the
assembled Chiefs at the Manitowanning Island afterward at the Sault-Ste-
Marie. At the latter place? between twenty and thirty of them were
presented to me by the Head Chief Chinguakonse [Shingwaukonse] who
declared they were all his relations and descendants in order that I might see
the abject state of poverty to which they were reduced and be? enabled to
represent the hardship of their case to the Government on my return to
Toronto (Jarvis, 1840).

Jarvis concluded that:

To this opinion that this intermarriage of Indian women to white men has the
effect of checking or retarding their civilization, as the only reason for
withholding presents from Half-Breeds I certainly think the sooner this
disability is removed from the Half-Breeds, the better for I am persuaded
that such an opinion can not be sustained by facts (Jarvis, 1840).

Historian David McNab notes in regard to these presents that:

Prior to 1858 presents had been distributed by the British government to the
Indian people either as a reward for their services in time of war or as a gift
to maintain their allegiance to the Crown. By the 1840s, presents were also being given for humanitarian reasons (McNab, 1985: 60).

According to the reference made by Jarvis as to the verbal policy about denying presents to the Métis, McNab, places it between 1818 and 1826. McNab states in the same article that the Government’s answer to this petition does not seem to exist or have been conserved and thus remains unknown. Nevertheless, the policy of not treating Métis as First Nation people, though continued, would be applied with a certain degree of ambiguity in some cases (as in the case of Métis living with the Beausoleil Island Band).

Thus, although the government made a general distinction between Metis and Indians, some Métis were included in the annual present-giving while others were not. Jarvis, however, believed that all Metis should be included in the present-giving and he rejected the arguments that were often advanced to the contrary. Nevertheless he made no attempt to relate “present-giving” to aboriginal or treaty rights. They were clearly separate considerations of government up to the mid-nineteenth century (McNab, 1985: 61).

In another article, the same historian, in discussing the 1840 petition adds that:

The Metis were clearly considered by the local non-Aboriginal government to be separate from the First Nations people. At times some Metis resided with the First Nations people or they lived adjacent to each other in their own communities such as at Saguingue, Penetanguishene, at Thessalon or at Sault Ste. Marie. Some Metis were included in the annual present-giving; others were excluded. [...] Some of the family names on the 1840 Petition, also suggest that there were close family connections and political relations between Metis at Saguingue, Penetanguishene, Sault Ste. Marie, among other places on Lake Huron and, even as far west as the Red River colony at that time. [...] Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, except for petitions, the Metis people were excluded from Treaty-making and ironically they and their communities thereby were able to retain their Aboriginal title and rights and later, in the same century, they were sometimes able to confirm them as Treaty rights (McNab, 2005b: 33).

As we can see, in the 1840s land title and the status of the Métis became an issue that can be seen in the following light.

Half-breed petitions of the time which tried to have this issue [land claims] addressed were set aside on the basis they could not be dealt with until the Indian surrender of the land had been arranged. Unlike Acadians, who were physically removed from their lands, the Metis of the Upper Great Lakes found the land legally removed from them.

It is certain that many Metis of the [Upper Great Lakes] area, including the Langlades left the area or re-established their communities in what are now Wisconsin and Illinois. And others, including Indians, began to trek north and west in search of new sources of fur and trade. But 53 Metis
communities in the Upper Great Lakes have been identified in the area by
the 1830s.
[...] Others, like the Langlades [...] left for greener pastures and later found
themselves the founding families of towns and even states south [...] (Dunn:
1988).

3.5 The difficulty in identifying the Métis of Penetanguishene

The original Drummond Island community is comprised of a mixture of people, French-
Canadians, other Europeans, First Nations people, and Métis. The term voyageurs used to describe
them does not distinguish between them, requiring, as indicated in the Praxis report, further scrutiny.

Of the seventy-five voyageur families claimed by Osborne to have migrated
from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene, approximately thirty-five can
be positively identified as having mixed Aboriginal/European ancestry.
This is consistent with Patterson’s estimate that 40% of the original
Drummond Island voyageur men were métis. The 1860-1861 Census
indicates that many of the original voyageur men were French-Canadians
born in Montreal, although their wives would have been Aboriginal or métis
women, and their children would have all been métis (Praxis, 2000: 97).

Using the formula suggested above and the list of Drummond Islanders (Patterson, 1987) the
number of Métis men would be 85 (40 % of the 212 men found on the list). The same list contains
the names of 71 women, most likely First Nation or Métis. This gives a total of 156 Métis people.
However, another list of Drummond Islanders, (Patterson, 1991) contains the names of 268 women
which again are probably First Nation or Métis. This would seem to indicate that the total number
of Métis would be higher than 212.

The Praxis report also indicated that there was continuity in the Métis community.

According to family historian Gwen Patterson, there exists a strong
continuity of residence in the Penetanguishene vicinity from its settlement
days after the migration from Drummond Island. Patterson has traced
families now in [sic] living Penetanguishene back eight generations to the
voyageur group (Praxis, 2000: 96).

Since, at present, there exists no complete list of the original Métis ancestors (separated from
the complete list of voyageurs from Drummond Island), it is hard to identify their descendants.
Also, because of Métis marriages after their move from Drummond Island and intermarriage
between Métis and later Métis and French Canadians and others, it is difficult to identify Métis
descendants in historical records just on the basis of surnames. The approach taken in this report
was limited to positively identified Métis family surnames by the Praxis report, but it could be much
larger. (The Praxis list includes these names: Louis Beausoleil’s children, Brissette, Cloutier,
Corbière, Joseph Craddock, Dusseaume, Farling, Fleury, Giroux, George Gordon, Louis G. Labatte,
Charles Lamorandière, Charles Langlade, Laramée, Laronde, Andrew Mitchell, Rousseau, William

The baptismal register of Ste. Anne’s parish in 1835 contains the names of the baptised
children’s parents. Twenty-one couples who had children were likely either French Canadian or
Métis men married to First Nation or Métis women (see Appendix 5).
The descendants of the Métis and voyageurs continue to distinguish themselves from the subsequent French Canadian settlers that arrived from Lower Canada. The 1860-1861 Census indicates that among the voyageurs Métis group, of those born before 1825, only 17 men were born in Quebec or Canada-East. Another 24 men and 25 women were also born in areas further west which gives a total of 49 individuals born elsewhere than in Canada-East (Marchand, 1989: 66).

An analysis of the data compiled by A. C. Osborne and by the Establishment Descendants Organisation shows that out of approximately 350 voyageurs (women, men and children) from Drummond Island, only six of the 64 individuals who gave their origins were born in Quebec, and 58 (including 32 women) of the same group come from the country of the fur-trade. The census, however, does not give the origins of the other voyageurs (Marchand, 1989: 65-66).

Original French:
Une analyse des données recueillies par A. C. Osborne et par the Establishment Descendants Organisation montre que sur environ 350 voyageurs (femmes, hommes et enfants) venus de l'île Drummond, seuls six des soixante-quatre personnes qui précisent leurs origines sont nées au Québec, et cinquante-huit (dont trente-deux femmes) du même groupe viennent du pays des fourrures. Le recensement ne précise pas, cependant, les origines des autres voyageurs.

The 1860-1861 Census also shows that out of a total of 234 families, 54 are descended from the voyageurs (Marchand, 1989: 59). There were also a few Métis families that chose to live among the First Nations people of the Penetanguishene area, as identified in the Praxis report.

The six families with mixed ancestry and/or mixed marriage enumerated in the 1871 Census include the following: John Cupogog, a Scottish carpenter, and his wife Margaret and six children; Samuel Essons, French, and his wife Ann Mary, and seven children; George McGregor, Scottish and Indian, his wife Sarah and two sons; John Manage, French boat-builder, his wife Sophia and two daughters; John Monague, French, his wife Mary and seven children, and; (sic) George Monague, French trader, his wife Sarah and two daughters. It should be noted that in the 1901 Census, the enumeration of the Christian Island Reserve did not record a single métis family (ORN 51: Praxis, 2000: 96).

William Charles Langlade was also living on Christian Island in 1873. His son Joseph was born there the same year, on March 18 (Tessier, Descendants of Charles Langlade, 2006).

3.6 Religion, Marriage and Intermarriage

The dealings that the Métis had with the Catholic church give some indications of their moral attitudes and customs. As well, the fact that at Penetanguishene they soon found themselves in regular contact with this religious institution entailed certain adjustments on their part.

In June 1833, John Bell wrote to Bishop MacDonell requesting that a Priest be sent to Penetanguishene as soon as possible in part because the traders were home for a few weeks and there were a number of marriages and baptisms to be performed.

“The greater part of the traders who has been out for twelve months is returned to stop a short time making redy [sic] their outfits for another year,
and no doubt has many marriages as well as christenings to perform. [...] There are several marriages to be performed among the Canadians at this place who sooner than be married by a magistrate. [sic] entered into bands to be married by the first priest arrived at this place. This is a sad state to see our fellow creature placed in living in a state of adultery for the want of means to go such a distance to obtain the legal rights of their church... (Doc. #8) (Praxis, 2000: 88).

Over the course of the next few years, the resident priest in Penetanguishene would be called upon, on various occasions, to consult with his superiors to decide what to do with regard to country marriages.

In one case, Father Proulx wrote to his bishop, Michael Power and received this advice:

This Canadian was probably married in the eyes of God and the Church to the Indian woman despite the fact that they did not at that time go before a priest. If he took her as his wife and she was baptised, the marriage must be considered valid. Whether it was or wasn’t, it is impossible to give him a dispensation to allow him to marry the niece of the departed. They must be separated: if they refuse you will admonish them to no longer take part in any ecclesiastical ceremonies, and after their death, unless they part beforehand, and repair the scandal they have caused as much as they can in the time they have, you will not give to either of them a church burial (ORN 124, quoted in Marchand, 1989: 59).

Original French:

Ce Canadien était probablement marié aux yeux de Dieu et de l'Église avec la Sauvagesse quoiqu'il n'ait pu dans le temps se présenter devant un Prêtre. S'il l'a prise comme sa femme et qu'elle fut baptisée, le mariage doit être considéré comme valide. Qu'il le fut ou qu'il ne le fut pas, il est impossible de lui accorder une dispense pour le marier avec la nièce de la défunte. Il faut les séparer: S'ils refusent de le faire, vous ne leur administrerez à prendre aucune part dans les rites ecclésiastiques, et après leur mort, à moins qu'ils ne se séparent avant de mourir et réparent le scandale qu'ils ont donné autant qu'ils pourront le faire dans le temps, vous ne leur donnerez ni à l'un ni à l'autre la sépulture écclésiastique (124).

Although the majority of the Métis and voyageurs eventually obtained the blessing of the Catholic church to reaffirm their country marriages, on occasion some flout this obligation, for instance, in 1832, when Louis Deschenaux and Pierre Oger are said to have exchanged spouses (Osborne, 1901: 161). In 1835, Father John Kegan reports the case of a young Canadian who asked to be separated from his legally married First Nation bride. Having never lived with him the woman admitted to bearing the child of another man (ORN 127: Marchand, 1989: 60). In 1843, Father Jean-Baptiste Proulx saw one of the marriages he performed between a Métis man and a First Nation woman annulled because his bishop ruled that the fact that the man had had a relationship with the sister of his wife had put them both in a state of excommunication (ORN 128: Marchand, 1989: 60). The same year, Father John P. Kennedy asked for permission to marry two Métis.

You will oblige me by directing me what satisfaction to require of a young man and young woman (both halfbreeds), who went to a place called Muskoka about 20 miles north of this place and lived together for about 10 or 12 days--the people there taking them to be man and wife--I sent the
young woman back to this place where she is waiting to be married when I shall have obtained one of the above dispensations (ORN 129, quoted in Marchand, 1989: 60).

In 1854, Father Frémiot finds himself requesting the annulment of the marriage between Olive Giraud and Antoine Letard so that the former can marry Alexis Beausoleil with whom she has been living for several years (ORN 132: Marchand, 1989: 61).

The tendency of the Métis to marry other Métis would seem to indicate a degree of closeness between members of the Métis community and the fact that they are either not interested in marryng women of the local French-Canadian population, or not able to do so. There may have been mutual distrust or distrust on one side. This also points to a sense of community among the Métis.

Our analysis of marriage records from 1835 to 1900 show that:

Prior to 1870, 32 sons of voyageurs marry daughters of voyageurs, 16 choose francophones from outside of the community of Lafontaine, three others marry anglophones and only four women from Lafontaine, one of the closest communities. This trend continues to 1900 when, of a total of 68 voyageurs, only two marry women from Lafontaine, and four others anglophone women. Twenty-five voyageurs marry women that are voyageurs descendants while 37 marriages involve voyageur descendants with francophone women from outside the area (Marchand, 1989: 61 and Appendix B). (Our translation).

Original French:
Avant 1870, trente-deux fils de voyageurs épousent des filles de voyageurs, seize choisissent des francophones de l'extérieur de la communauté de Lafontaine, trois autres prennent des anglophones et seulement quatre, des filles de Lafontaine, pourtant une des communautés les plus proches. Cette tendance se poursuit jusqu'en 1900 lorsque, des 68 voyageurs, seulement deux épousent des femmes de Lafontaine, et quatre autres des femmes anglophones. Vingt-cinq voyageurs épousent des femmes d'origine voyageur tandis qu'il y a trente-sept mariages entre voyageurs et des femmes francophones de l'extérieur (voir l'annexe B).

In a letter by John T. Simpson, dated October 19, 1893, from Victoria B.C. to his brother James Simpson, the writer, a Méetis descendant, whose mother (Catherine Craddock) was fathered by Lieutenant Craddock at St. Joseph Island before the War of 1812, alludes to one aspect of his heritage:

Of the Indian names of our family, I cannot recall of any except mine which is Wah-ah-mick (white beaver or bear) and sister Henrietta had one (I cannot pronounce or remember distinctly) signifying Wild Red Rose, and all of us have Indian names, but I do not think they are recorded in the Old Family Bible which I recall seeing at the Old Home but do not know where it is now (Simpson, John, PAO, 1864-1899).

His sister Kate (Simpson) Mitchell, who married David Mitchell, the Méetis son of Dr. David Mitchell, also writing to her brother John, mentions their family history in a letter dated Chicago, October 28, 1893.
I know of the Craddock family. I think Uncle Joe is still living in Coldwater. I think he was only an infant when his Father Lieut. Craddock was ordered home to England after the war of 1812 was over. When I was a child old Charles Langlade used to tell us wonderful stories about our grandfather and said that our grandmother was a beautiful woman a chief’s daughter, part French. Lieut. Craddock fell desperately in love and took her for his wife before witnesses in the _____ that when he left he would take her and be married over again in England. He was called away suddenly and could not take his wife and two children. He afterwards sent for them twice and had Capt. Anderson attend to his affairs. Capt. Anderson sent for them but found Mrs. Craddock had died of consumption (or broken heart) she thought he had left her altogether; after she died her uncle took charge of the children and when Capt. Anderson wanted them to sail to England to meet their Father they were hidden, and as Lieut. Craddock could not leave his post at the time, they were left to their relatives. Capt. Anderson tried hard to get them but didn’t succeed. When our dear mother was about twenty she was quite ill and they were afraid of her lungs. Old Dr Mitchell took care of her and she lived with them and that’s where Father met her. She was a very pretty brunette and a lovely woman. David’s Father (Mitchell) and our parents were married the same day. All this was told me when a child and I have remembered everything (Mitchell, PAO, 1864-1893).

The writings of Dédin Révol, a French-Canadian associate of George Gordon who lived both on Drummond Island and in Penetanguishene where he was instrumental in obtaining a resident priest, give some insight into the Métis community’s workings. For instance, in November of 1833, in writing to Gordon, he includes a word for Charles Langlade.

Tell Charles Langlade that I embrace him with all my heart and pray him and his wife not to forget what he promised me concerning his children, that he will make of them good Christians, and that he council them, and in my name, to avoid all bad company and especially parties and bars (Gordon Papers #5).

Original French:

Dites à Charles Langlade que je l’embrasse de tous coeur, et le pris de ne pas oublier ainsi que sa femme ce qu’il m’a promis concernant ses enfants qu’il en fasse de bons chrétiens, et qu’il leur recommande et en mon non déviter toute mauvaise compagnie surtout les Bals et les Cantines.

In another letter, in February 1834, Révol, who writes from Montreal to Gordon, alludes to the fact that not everybody in the community would be happy to see him return.

[..] but those that I would so often preach to about the vices that they enjoy and who see in me a rigid critic from whom they could not hide anything, an obstacle to their gathering, who prevented a part of the inhabitants from seeing them on a regular basis, would they be happy to see me return? This cannot be […] I loved, I love the Canadians of Penitenguichone (sic) I believe that I’ve proven it to them! Greetings to Lacourse, Langlade, Deschenaux, Lépine, Corbière (Gordon Papers, #14).

Original French:
In the same letter, Révol asks Gordon to send him, via Toronto, some maple sugar and a barrel of whitefish or trout.

The first church of Ste. Anne’s in Penetanguishene was built in 1833 on a lot donated by Pierre Giroux who was married to a First Nation woman (Osborne, 1908: 146 and 158). It may or may not be a coincidence that Ste. Anne, the same name as the parish and church at Michilimackinac and then Mackinac Island, was chosen as the name of the new parish in Penetanguishene. The parish histories of Ste. Anne’s do not mention how and why this name was chosen.

The poor state of the Métis and voyageurs parishioners is mentioned by the clergy on several occasions. In 1832, a priest writing from Penetanguishene notes that they are unable to afford a resident priest (Marchand, 1989: 63).

On September 10, 1835, Father Rémi Gaulin visited the parish and performed 31 baptisms of children between the ages 8 days to 4 years old. The same year, Father John Kegan, stationed for a short time in Penetanguishene, wrote about the poor state of his parishioners.

My arrival here was hailed with an unexpressible mark of joy and esteem. The Congregation is I am happy to find large and flourishing [...] agreeably to Your Lordship's directions I got Church wardens nominated on my arrival here. Immediately after their nomination, I told them that they represented the Catholic Congregation of Pentagshishe (sic), and In that capacity, that it was their duty to regulate and direct the temporalities of the Church, and particularly the Salary of the Incumbent. They seemed highly pleased with their newly acquired dignity, but peremptorily refused to affix their names to a formula, which I drew up, leaving thereon a blank or vacant space to mention the Sum they would volunteer to vote me. They would take no such responsibilities on themselves, said why their neighbours they said, were poor--had nothing better [show?] Some woorden [Suggon] which they could not easily transform into money--in that case said I, resign to me the keys of the Church and every other power with which you are invested, and I will become my own paymaster, that is, I will, like the Clergy of Ireland, throw myself on the benevolence of the people to this proposition (ORN 38, letter dated February 2, 1835 quoted in Marchand, 1989: 43).

Nevertheless, he notes that he expects to be able to live off the Sunday collection even though the money derived from baptisms, 50 cents each, is negligible. In 1839, and during the following decade, the resident priest, Amable Charest asks his bishop for some financial aid because his parishioners are unable to support him (Marchand, 1989: 63).

### 3.7 Education

There was an attempt to set up a school in Penetanguishene in the 1830s. Although in 1833 it seems Antoine Lacourse was teaching to a group of 26 pupils, this school was short-lived and no other replaced it (Marchand, 1989: 55). As well, in 1835, Dédin Révol, who had relocated to Chambly in Quebec, tried to offer an education to a few boys, at least two of which were Métis, sent to him from Penetanguishene.
Louis fears leaving his woods and prefers to ___ all his life as an independent man. Pierre probably thought that I was going to have him sent here to live with a cane in hand, or to make his fortune, he was in error, I cannot [...] I thought that some of the young people from Penitenguichine (sic) and in particular Giroux junior and Louis Langlade would have been flattered to have a position in a house and, all the while earning wages, give themselves an education which is often useful for acquiring financial means (ORN 94: quoted in Marchand, 1989: 55).

3.8 Métis ties in Georgian Bay and the Upper Great Lakes

There is some evidence of Métis from the Penetanguishene area maintaining ties with other Métis kin and friends in Georgian Bay and the Upper Great Lakes.

The second wife of William Simpson, Catherine Craddock, corresponded with an uncle, no doubt Métis, on St. Joseph Island, who wrote to her September 3, 1847, in French:

[...] the ties that bond us as kin are such that we, especially me, would be pleased to receive news of you and not only of you but of my nephew Bemwewidong [Joseph Craddock] as well as of your children. [...] We remain in Potigamissing, where you, or I should say we, spent our youth. I think you would like to see these places where you lived the best moments of your youth. The underbrush has started to cover the village on Drummond Island. It is totally unrecognizable (Simpson, PAO, 1811-1849).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Métis people from Penetanguishene and elsewhere began to establish themselves in the communities along the east shore of Georgian Bay, like Port Severn.

Ed Bressette, born in Penetanguishene in 1865, was a year old when his family moved to Port Severn. He was married in Port Severn around 1884. [...] Pete Gendron and Ed Bressette landed at Point au pas when they first came to Port Severn.

William Geroux from Thunder Bay, arrived on August 5th, 1888. He was born in 1850 and died in Port Severn in 1938 at the age of 88.

In 1915 Zavier (Xavier) Geroux sold to William and Jacob Geroux some 400 acres at Port Severn. [...] William Geroux also sold land at Port
Severn for a parking lot to Severn Lodge in Gloucester Pool the same year [1932].

[...] Frank Geroux came to Port Severn in 1889. Frank and Jacob Geroux crushed grain with stones for flower (Rawson, 1976: 27-28).

Paul Bressette and Theopole Bressette are listed in the List of Freehold Residents for Victoria Harbour in 1880 (Boyer, 1989: 99).

In Northern Georgian Bay, in 1893, J. C. Hamilton, relates his encounters with Métis families, no doubt related to those of Southern Georgian Bay: “There are many half breeds at Killarney, mostly French and Roman Catholic, and there is a small Roman Catholic church” (Hamilton, 1893: 18).

The Métis were not only spread out among various communities on the east shore of Georgian Bay, but some also established themselves in the Southampton area on the east shore of Lake Huron as well as in the Owen Sound area on the west side of Georgian Bay. The names of these families and their descendants include: Martel, Rouleau, Fagnan, Leturge, Bizaillon, Laforge, Belland, Solomon, Lariviere, Normandin, Lacerte, Martin, Latour, Sayer, McKay, Haldane, Leblanc, Chevrette, McFarlane, Frechette, Souliere, Bell, Gonneville/Granville, Beausoleil/Bosley, Wallace, Piche, de Lamorandiere, Cadotte, Chebott, Ritchie, Loranger, Longe, Thibeau, McGregor, Gooding, Johnston, Borland, Bentam, Longe/Lange, Colin (Collins), Belhumeur/Bellemore, Lalalle, Desjardins, Cazelet/Cosley, Payette, Spence, Kennedy, Cameron, McLean, Reid, Spencer/Cheechoo, McLaren, Dease, McArthur and McLay (MacNab, 2005a: 12).

Many of these names are related to the original Penetanguishene Métis community, since these Métis:

[...] maintained close ties to those of similar culture about the lake and were connected by family and marriage to almost every community from Mackinac around the north shore of Lake Huron to Owen Sound and beyond (McArthur, 2005: 15).

There are examples of mobility between these communities, for example, the Desjardins family.

The Charles Desjardins family share family and cultural ties with the Métis families at Big Bay, Owen Sound, Saugeen and Penetanguishene and around the Lake. [...] Angelique [Lavallee] was born on St. Joseph Island about 1820 and married Drummond Island voyageur Charles Desjardins. They raised their family about Georgian Bay, baptizing children at Chebonaning (Killarney) 1838, Penetanguishene 1840s, then in the Nawash village and at Cape Croker (McLay, 2005: 50).

Another link between the Métis families of Southern and Western Georgian-Bay-Lake Huron is demonstrated by Pat McArthur with regard to the founding of catholic churches in these communities. The first church was founded in Goderich in 1834.

Once settled in the Lake Huron on both sides of the Peninsula, the [Métis] families again demonstrated their faith by contributing to the building of churches at both new settlements, Goderich and Penetanguishene. [...] Documents of the trading families are found nine years later [1843] in Father Schneider’s records, St. Peter’s, Goderich. Among them are those of Joseph
Lange previously at Drummond, Augustin Gonneville, Achille Cadotte, Antoine Beausoleil, Solomon Cosley, François Deschamps, Francis Tranchemontagne, Peter Andres and others.

In 1835, the year after the Goderich church was founded, Ste Anne’s was established at Penetanguishene. Those in the Saugeen territory who are documented as donating to the building of this second church, Ste Anne’s, were Charles Desjardins, Charles Laronde, Joseph Lange, Thomas Jones, Pierre Blette dit Sorrell, and Regis Loranger (McArthur, 2005: 73).

An account published in 1849 by Alphonsus William Henry Rose, and quoted by Pat McArthur, alludes to the Métis community living in Owen Sound at the time:

As you come up to Squaw Point, where a lighthouse is to be erected, you begin to see the houses of sundry French Canadian half-breeds, who have squatted on or near the military reserve, and who live chiefly by fishing and maple sugar making [...] (McArthur, 2005: 134).

The fur-trade remained a strong force of attraction for these early families.

In addition to the families mentioned, other Metis families resided at Owen Sound and Big Bay prior to the 1850s. They included the trading families Lajoice, Restoule, Faille, Riel, McLeod, to name a few. They had similar origins—most had previously been NWC employees, some were born in the Northwest, and all had mixed-blood families. Upon coming to Lake Huron most had rehired for the trade, either with the Hudson’s Bay Company, other large trading interests, or trading families, such as the Mitchells (McArthur, 2005: 137).

Another place where Georgian Bay Métis seem to have established themselves is on the Cape Crocker First Nation reserve. In an historical article about the Cape Crocker First Nation community, probably originally published in 1931 in the Wiarton Echo, Lawrence A. Keeshig, mentions that, in 1867:

[..] many of them [younger people] who had been adopted into the band, were the Lamorandiers, and the Peaulx, French half-breeds from the north shore [...] the McGregors—Scotch half-breeds, one of whom Charles Keeshig had married (Croft, 2001: 219).

This author goes on to describe that, in the following year, there was, for the first time, an election for the position of chief.

That first election placed Chief McGregor, half-breed son of the “wee Rob Roy”— that Scotch trader, navigator and marine surveyor in power [...] Chief McGregor remained in power until his death with Fred Lamorandiere as his secretary (Croft, 2001: 219).

As well, he gives the names of those people on the Cape Crocker First Nations, Honour roll list, a number of which have a link to Georgian Bay Métis families, that is: Sgt. Frank Lavalley, Pte.

Certain families and individuals of the Penetanguishene Métis community would also seem to have links to the larger Métis community. An example of this is François Dusome, born in 1822 in Red River, who moved to Penetanguishene and died there in 1906.

The genealogies of the Langlade and Labatte families (Tessier, Descendants of Louis George Labatte, 2006 and Tessier, Descendants of Charles Langlade, 2006) provide examples of members of these two old Métis lines who lived in various communities along the shores of Georgian Bay and elsewhere in Ontario. These demonstrate the mobility of the Penetanguishene Métis and their participation in the larger Métis nation. The members of these two prominent Métis families have lived in many localities around Georgian Bay.

The male descendants of Charles Langlade born in 1785 at Michilimackinac and Joséphine Margaret Ah-ghah-dah/Ayonida born in 1781 in Lake Huron, who came to Penetanguishene, are at different times living in these numerous communities: Michilimackinac, Drummond Island, Penetanguishene, Tiny Township, Britt, Christian Island, Parry Sound, Muskoka Mills, Muscosh, Moon River, Moonfall, Timmins, Baxter Township, Port Severn, Byng Inlet, Wallbridge & Brown Township, Tay Township, Kenora, Algoma East, Robinson Island, Spragge Township, Massey, Blind River, Waubaushene.

The male descendants of Louis George Labatte, born in 1786 at Green Bay, Wisconsin, and his first wife Louise/Louisa Cadotte and his second wife, Julie Françoise Garoite/Garouette, born in 1791 in Wisconsin, are also found in different communities along the Georgian Bay shore: Drummond Island, Tiny Township (including Thunder Bay Beach and Lafontaine), Penetanguishene, Sault Ste. Marie, Victoria Harbour, Owen Sound, Midland, Tay Township, Port Severn, Rivière aux Sables and Baxter Township.

According to the 2001 Census statistics, there are 48,340 people in Ontario who have declared Métis origins. Of these, there are 4,230 in Simcoe County which represents 8.75 % of the declared Métis population of the province. As well, the total Métis population of North Simcoe (Tiny Township, Penetanguishene, Midland and Tay Township) is 2,750.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Number of persons having declared Métis origins (2001)</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Percentage of Métis in relation to total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simcoe County</td>
<td>4,230</td>
<td>372,325</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penetanguishene</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>7,875</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>15,850</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny Township</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>9,015</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tay Township</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>9,110</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrie</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>102,345</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severn Township</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orillia</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>28,130</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parry Sound District</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>39,325</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskoka District</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>51,710</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, it is interesting to note that of the 12,000 people officially registered to date with the Métis Nation of Ontario, around 2,000 of these are located in the area of the Georgian Bay Métis Council and are, for the most part, descendants of the original Penetanguishene Métis community (Métis Nation of Ontario and figures supplied by the Georgian Bay Métis Council).

In summary, with regard to the ethnogenis of the Penetanguishene Métis community, we can conclude as did the Praxis report, that:
- sociological analysis presents strong indications that the Métis formed a distinct community during the 19th century,
- genealogical data enable the positive identification of a large number of Métis families,
- adult Métis males remain occupationally distinct from other settlers, in particular French-Canadians from Lafontaine,
- and Métis marriage patterns involved a high degree of endogamy during the 19th century, likely pointing to cultural differences between Métis and French Canadians in the area (Praxis, 2000: 74).

We can also agree with the finding in the Praxis report that:

The historical evidence indicates that voyageur families composed of both French Canadians and métis were members of a distinct community at Penetanguishene. [...] Many of the descendants of this voyageur group – the majority of whom were of mixed Aboriginal/European ancestry – stayed in the Penetanguishene area into the 20th century, demonstrating a continuity of residence. Marriage and occupational patterns provide strong social indicators that this group remained distinct from other groups who later settled in Tiny and Tay townships (Praxis, 2000: 142).

Analysis of the 1901 Census as done in the Praxis report is revealing since:

The 1901 Census records are a valuable tool for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Métis population in regions of Ontario at the turn of the century. [...] The fact that the 1901 census included Métis origins reflects an official acknowledgment that such mixed populations existed in Canada. [...] individuals with the code FB are presumed to have told the enumerator that they were of mixed French and Indian origin (Reimer, 2004: 578).

The Praxis report demonstrates that at the turn of the last century the Métis community is present in the area but has become harder to identify (Praxis, 2000: 109). The 1901 Census data for the district of Simcoe East, which included Penetanguishene, Tiny, Tay, and Medonte and the township of Baxter (Honey Harbour), showed, according to Praxis that:

The largest percentage of métis residents within a total population was in Baxter Township, where 25% of the population self-identified as “French Breed.” Another 55% are enumerated as French, some of whom intermarried with métis, and whose children were subsequently coded as “FB” (French Breed). Within the combined districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound, 28% of the total métis population lived in Baxter. Honey Harbour is located in
Baxter Township, but the Census does not provide any way to verify that this is where the métis population was enumerated. However, the fact that several of these families are also listed by Murdoch (1999) as among the early pioneers of the Honey Harbour community, strongly suggests that this is the case [...] Of the twenty-five households enumerated as métis, nine have surnames belonging to Drummond Island voyageurs, including: Brissette (3); Boucher (2); Lamoureux (2); Langlais (1), and; Vasseur (1). Occupationlly, the majority of métis families in this township were involved in farming and lumbering; two were boat-builders and another two were fishermen.

Within Simcoe County as a whole, virtually all métis lived in Simcoe East, which then included Penetanguishene and Midland. The largest concentration of métis in this area lived in Tay and Tiny Townships, of which the 304 residents who were enumerated as “Breeds” (the majority “French Breed”), represented 90% of the métis population in Simcoe County (Praxis, 2000: 109).

For the town of Penetanguishene:

[...] only 22 individuals (5 households) were enumerated as “French Breed”, including two Vasseur families, and one Boucher family. However, it should be noted that a large percentage (47%) of the Penetanguishene population identified as White/French, some of whom may have had métis ancestry, but who in 1901 self-identified as French. Drummond Island voyageur surnames such as Brissette, Cadieux, Dusome, Gendron, Langlade and Priske [Prisque] coded as ‘CWO’ (White) of “French” origin suggest that an identity shift may have occurred among some descendants of métis families, particularly those who married members of the European settler groups (Praxis, 2000: 110).

And finally, in Tiny Township, the report notes that:

[...] almost all (97%) of métis were enumerated within a single polling division (No.5), suggesting a community of neighbourhood consisting of about 35 métis households. Of these, 17 households have surnames of Drummond Island voyageurs: Beausoleil (3); Coaty [Côté] (1); Dusome (5); Lamoureaux (1); Landragan (2); Langlad/Longlad (2); Laramee (1), and; Trudeau (2) (Praxis, 2000: 110 – 111).

To this effect, the Praxis report concludes that:

Three centres of métis population in the Penetanguishene area are evident from the 1901 Census returns (enumerated mainly as “French Breed”). Of approximately 430 métis in the area, 94 (22%) lived in Baxter where Honey Harbour is located. Another 124 (29%) lived in Tay where Midland, Port McNicoll and Victoria Harbour are now situated. Finally, 180 (42%) of métis lived in Tiny which included Penetanguishene and the Military Reserve. The 1901 Census provides the strongest evidence available that

It should be noted that in the information regarding the 1901 Census it is mentioned that those of mixed white and Native heritage were to be described by the initial of their white heritage and the letter "b" (for breed) - "f.b." for French breed, "e.b." for English breed, "s.b." for Scotch breed and "i.b." for Irish breed (Census, 1901, schedule 1). This allowed Métis to self-identify. However, in the 1911 Census, none of the families identified as Métis (or half-breed) in Penetanguishene and Tiny Township are listed the same way, and are all indicated as French Canadian. The notes supplied by Statistics Canada regarding the questions asked during this Census seem to indicate that the origins of the person was based on his or her father’s origin and that Métis or Half-breed origins were not noted, only First Nation origins (Census, 1911, schedule 1). If this is the case, this certainly did not encourage Métis to self-identify. Also we have no way of knowing how the origins question was asked and if respondents would have been discouraged from giving Métis or Half-breed as their origin, or have felt intimidated to do so.

No doubt the reticence to self-identify as Métis in the late 1800s and early 1900s can be attributed to some extent to the negative view of the Métis held by white Anglo-Protestant Ontarians, in particular following the Northwest Rebellion and the hanging of Louis Riel in 1885, and the strong influence of the Protestant Orange Lodge in many areas of Ontario. It should also be remembered that during the Northwest Rebellion the Midland Battalion, raised in Ontario, sent a large contingent drawn from several communities, who participated notably in the Battle of Batoche.

As mentioned in the Powley case:

[...] the defense argued that discrimination and prejudice against Métis by both Indian and European communities resulted in a reluctance among many individuals and families to self-identify as Métis, factors that may have negatively influenced such self-ascription during enumerations in 1901 (Powley 2001: para. 35) (Reimer, 2004: 579-580).

Encouraged to choose between their White and Aboriginal heritage, some Métis would choose the former.

[...] Federal government policy, as it evolved in the late 1800s and early 1900s, was to treat people of Indian and European ancestry as either one or the other. Leighton (n.d., p. 26) writes that the legal and social reality of the “halfbreeds” of Ontario was that: “they had to choose whether they would be Indian or white. [...] This policy, then, may have encouraged people of European and Indian origins to ignore or bury their ancestry.”

It is also not clear to what extent (sic) people who called themselves and were known as “halfbreeds” would adopt the term “Métis” (Peters, 1991: 25).

“Identity shift” as it has been called is not uncommon, as explained in the Praxis report:

Macrae’s account of family histories involving ambiguous Aboriginal identity and band membership suggest that these individuals and families of mixed descent were not concerned with a distinct métis identity. Rather, the evidence indicates that they shifted between ‘White’ and ‘Indian’ identities depending on the advantages offered by one over the other, and self-
ascription was a matter of expediency. This is consistent with other cases of “situational ethnicity” among métis, for example that of Billy Caldwell (Clifton 1978) and Charles Langlade (Peterson 1981:158, c.f. PRAXIS Research Associates 1999a: 22-23). (Praxis, 2000: 123).

One local example of how Métis descendants were perceived at the turn of the century by local French-Canadians is related in Le loup de Lafontaine, a fictionalized account of a true story involving a ferocious wolf. Written in 1955, the action takes places in 1902. An altercation occurs between Colbert Tessier, an habitant farmer, and fisherman François Labatte, a Métis descendant, over the dogs of the latter that are accused by Tessier of killing his entire flock of sheep. The two exchange insults and Tessier kills Labatte’s dogs, although the two will be reconciled later when the real culprit, the wolf, is finally shot (Marchildon, 1955: 11-12).
4. The way of life and main occupations of the Penetanguishene area Métis community and how they were transformed

Over the century stretching from their arrival in the late 1820s to the 1920s, the Métis in the Penetanguishene area were to continue certain of their traditional occupations but, for economic reasons, would also develop new ones. Traditionally, as notes David McNab about the Métis in general:

In addition to their labour in the fur, buffalo and timber trades, they often worked at commercial fishing. They found employment as interpreters for the Indian Department and acted as facilitators in various negotiations between Government and the First Nations people [...] (MacNab, 2005b: 31).

In the early 1900s, A. C. Osborne wrote of those whose forefathers had come from Drummond Island that:

Their descendants retain many of the characteristics of the early voyageurs, taking naturally to hunting, fishing, guiding tourists and campers and kindred adventure, though gradually drifting into other and more permanent occupations (Osborne, 1901: 126).

At the beginning of the 1870s, Penetanguishene was described as a place where: “The chief trade is in furs and fish, and provisions for the mining districts on the north shore of Lake Huron” (Gazetteer 1872-3: 129).

The Praxis report offers these findings with regard to Métis participation in the fur trade and harvesting activities.

Métis in the Georgian Bay region, particularly around Penetanguishene and in the Muskoka and Parry Sound Districts, were active participants in the fur trade and other forms of resource harvesting, particularly fishing and in the developing lumber industry (Praxis, 2000: 147).

In this section we propose to examine the various occupations of the Métis by sector.

4.1 Fur trade

The fur trade is the element that brought the French and later other people of European descent to the Upper Great Lakes. Throughout the 1700s and 1800s the offspring of these fur traders and their employees and partners who founded families with First Nation and Métis women participated in this trade in various capacities. As we have seen, this trade evolved considerably in the 1820s and after at the same time as the Métis community was established in Penetanguishene.

Jean-Baptiste Sylvestre junior, whose mother, Angélique McKay, was Métis, recounts how his father was engaged in the fur trade in the early 1800s after receiving his discharge from the military following the War of 1812. Jean-Baptiste senior moved to Drummond Island in 1816.

He received his discharge, moved to Drummond Island with the troops, and started business as a fur trader. [...] After moving to Drummond Island in 1816 my father brought me to Nottawasaga River in a large birch bark canoe
My father came to Newmarket with his furs [...] He traded among the Muskoka lakes and at Sylvestre's Lake in Parry Sound (Osborne, 1901: 142).

Independent and company traders, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, were setting up shop and traveling around Georgian Bay.

Clearly the interest in Georgian Bay was as much mercantile as military. Although dominated by the Nor’westers after 1784, independent traders backed by merchants in Penetanguishene and York appeared on the north shore in greater numbers in the 1820s and 1830s, reflecting a new Upper Canadian influence in the area. In 1830, there were trading posts at La Cloche, Whitefish Lake, Mississagi River, French River, and Shewanaga. [...] By the late 1820s the situation in La Cloche district, which included small posts at La Cloche, French River, and Shewanaga looked grim. [...] Chief Factor John McBean struggled with a sharp decline of fur-bearing animals, an erratic fishery, and levels of starvation that forced the “inland Indians ... to abandon hunting grounds and come out to the establishment to save their lives and those of their children.” By 1835 he concluded the country to be exhausted (ORN 3: Campbell, 2005: 64).

In Penetanguishene itself, there are limited sources of information on fur trade activity: “During the 19th century, at least four fur trade stores were in operation in Penetanguishene. Journals and account books have either not survived or are unavailable to the public” (Praxis, 2000: 56). As well:

Not all regions of present-day Ontario had Hudson’s Bay or other fur trade company posts, and as a consequence, these records are not available for some areas. This is the case for Penetanguishene and the surrounding Georgian Bay region [...] (Reimer, 2004: 576).

George Gordon’s trading post, would seem to be the first one to be established in the area after those in Matchedash Bay in the late 1700s. A.C. Osborne described it:

Mr. Gordon spent about three years at Drummond Island, during which time he married Miss Agnes Landry, long admired as the “Belle of the Island” and entitled by common consent the “Beauty of the Lake.” After two or three children were born he moved to Penetanguishene Bay in 1824 and settled at Gordon's Point, naming it “The Place of Penetangoushene.” From this post he carried on a considerable business, having associated with him his halfbrother, J. B. Rousseau, who ranged the Muskoka and Parry Sound districts in the interests of the fur trade, and was the first white man on Lake Rousseau, which bears his name. He built a considerable establishment at the Point, the foundations of which may still be seen, and had the first clearing in this region in connection with his fur trade, his farm joining the ordnance lands north with Sergeant Kennedy's farm, the only land between (Osborne, 1908: 49-50).

In 1827, Simpson from Drummond Island writes a letter to Gordon describing the fur trade at Drummond Island as good: “I hope the hunt has been as good with you as here, Rolette and
Mitchell have now about 5 Packs furs which is a good deal at this time of the year” (Doc. #1, Praxis, 2000: 78).

Métis fur trader, Andrew Mitchell, (the son of Dr. David Mitchell and Elizabeth Bertrand) is, beside George Gordon, among the first in Penetanguishene to do business there:

A newspaper article by W.R. Williams—first published in the Midland Free Press in 1946 – describes the pioneer fur traders in Penetanguishene as the “Big Four”: George Gordon, Dedine Revolte (Revol; Reval) Andrew Mitchell, and William Simpson (Doc. #63: 4). A report ca. 1844 by the Deputy Provincial Surveyor noted what likely represented the establishments of these four independent traders:

In this village [Penetanguishene] there are four merchant’s stores; but their trade is chiefly with the Indians for furs... The inhabitants, in all, are probably about one hundred, and are chiefly composed of French roman Catholic Canadians, a good deal intermixed with half-cast Indians, and are principally dependent on the fur trading and fishing for their support. (Doc. #15: 1, Praxis, 2000: 78 - 79).

Prior to this the Mitchell’s were also involved in fur-trading elsewhere on Lake Huron, notably in the Southampton area where Pierre Piché, who in 1818 worked for Dr. Mitchell, had established a post on the south side of the Saugeen River. He took a wife among the First Nation people of the area and received supplies and goods through Mitchell and later through his sons David and George (McArthur, 2005: 5).

An article published in 1932, summarises the fur trade in the area.

The importance of Penetanguishene from a trade standpoint had been realized years previous by the voyageurs of Quebec. Indian fur traders had set up an establishment on the “place of the White Rolling Sands” years before Major-General Simcoe explained the strategic position to my lords of the Privy Council. The voyageurs made use of Penetanguishene as a stopping off place and loading port where they headed for Lake Simcoe and over an inland water route to Montreal and Quebec. The early fur buyers of Simcoe’s time stated that one agent at Penetang bought $ 40,000 worth of pelts a year at his Penetang trading station and, of course, gave mostly goods in exchange for the skins (The Evening Telegram, 1932).

Another account of this trade is given succinctly by Fieguth:

Penetanguishene, for example, had originated with several fur traders from Drummond Island and their retinues of voyageur families (ORN 110). With the Military Establishment the annual presentation of “gifts” by the Governor of Upper Canada to the Lake Huron tribes had also been transferred there (ORN 111). During the early 1830s over two thousand Indians gathered annually for the ceremony (ORN 112) and Penetanguishene appears to have become the principal focus of the Lake Huron fur trade [...] the traffic in furs passing through Toronto, and thence to tidewater ports for overseas shipment. This commercial activity persisted successfully and North American and European buyers purchased pelts worth $12,000 to
$20,000 at Thompson’s fur auction as late as 1881 (ORN 113: Fieguth, 1968: 20).

The most successful and long term fur merchant in Penetanguishene was definitely Alfred Thompson (Barry, 1968: 43).

The fur trade carried out from Penetanguishene seems to have been considerable enough for the Hudson’s Bay Company operations in Northern Ontario to consider it a threat. Historian Elaine Mitchel writing about the Hudson’s Bay Company in Northern Ontario states that:

The most formidable problem confronting the Timiskaming district during the 1830s was the growing opposition from Canada which, [...] had by 1836 reached Lake Timiskaming itself. This opposition originated in two different sources. [...] The second wave of opposition came from Upper Canada. Newmarket, Sandwich, and Penetanguishene merchants, among others, financed traders who ranged from Lake Simcoe to Drummond Island, north as far as Michipicoten, east to the French River and Lake Nipissing, and inland along the rivers flowing into Lake Huron. Many of these traders were North West Company halfbreeds who had grown up in the country [...] Until he went bankrupt in 1837 a Penetang merchant, Andrew Mitchell, was the principal outfitter of all the Lake Huron traders (ORN 1) and the village maintained its position as the centre of the Upper Canadian trade throughout the middle years of the century, with an important fur sale of its own (Mitchel, 1977: 158-159).

Mitchel gives evidence of this threat.

It was two aggressive Penetanguishene traders, Samuel Peck and Charles Harris, who precipitated Angus Cameron’s return to Fort Timiskaming. They usually wintered on Lake Nipissing but in 1833-34 they went to Lake Timagami, dangerously close to the Fort. [...] Cameron arrived at Fort Timiskaming in September 1834 to find McDonell, before leaving, had succeeded in engaging Harris for the Company’s service, although Peck, the dominant partner, had refused his offer. (ORN 4) He therefore dispatched Harris to Lake Timagami and sent Chief trader Richard Hardisty (his new second-in-command), with a strong force of Canadians, to Lake Nipissing, where Peck had returned, outfitted by Andrew Mitchell. When, soon afterwards, Peck offered to sell his goods to Hardisty, Cameron immediately surmised that this winter’s foray was merely a ruse on Mitchell’s part to make a quick profit form the Company’s apparent anxiety to exclude strangers, and he turned down the offer. Instead, in the old fur trade way, he had Peck so closely watched that the trader left the district for good in the spring (ORN 5, Mitchel, 1977: 159-160).

Thompson’s operations would soon become a bigger threat than Mitchell’s.

An article from The Globe (a Toronto newspaper) dated June 12, 1865, reproduced in Murray (1963: 327) provides rare financial information on one store (Thompson’s) and discloses that a fur sale held the previous week had generated $14,955.00 revenue. The newspaper article then adds:
The furs are sold by private contract, and this year competition ran so close that we believe in two estimates amounting to nearly fifteen thousand dollars, only thirty dollars difference was found between the two tenders (Praxis, 2000: 56).

Alfred Thompson’s reach in the fur trade extended to the Timiskaming area where his operations competed against those of the Hudson’s Bay Company. This was to be the case from the mid 1840s to the beginning of the 1860s.

The [HB] Company’s most persistent opponent there [Timiskaming district] was Michel L’Aigle, or Dukis (alternately spelled Dokis or Ducas). Formely in the Company’s service, he was established by 1845 at the head of the French River, outfitted from Penetanguishene (ORN 35, Mitchel, 1977: 195).

According to Mitchel, the competition between Thompson and the Hudson’s Bay Company intensified in the period between 1858-1862.

The opposition to the Nipissing post came mostly from Lake Huron, more especially from Penetanguishene, where a lively annual fur trade and (after 1855) direct rail connections with Toronto attracted buyers from as far distant as New York. Alfred Thompson [Penetanguishene merchant] not only outfitted Dukis, the Company’s most persistent and successful rival, but other lesser traders who went out among the Timiskaming, Lake Superior, and KenogamiSSI Indians. Repeated attempts on the part of the Company’s officers to persuade Dukis to return to the service always failed because Sir George would never agree to his terms, and although the Company lowered its tariffs and paid cash for furs, the measures apparently had little success.

Just before he died, Sir George consented to further changes, namely to re-establish the guard post abandoned in 1848 at the mouth of the French River, to supply Nipissing from Lacloche and to appoint an agent at Penetang to intercept the Nipissing furs on their way to market. (ORN 49) Hopkins immediately implemented these changes [...] (Mitchel, 1977: 214-215).

The Hudson’s Bay Company’s decision to appoint an agent in Penetanguishene seems to have been:

[...] an emergency measure, precipitated by the news that fully half of Thompson’s 1862 returns, amounting to about seventy thousand dollars, had come from Lake Nipissing. Since the lake itself could never have furnished such a large quantity of furs, in addition to those collected at the Company’s post, many of them must have come from other parts of the Timiskaming district, a supposition which their superior quality confirmed. If the drain were to continue, as Hopkins was convinced it must, it was better to make sure of the furs, rather than allow them to swell Thompson’s returns and inflate the importance of the Penetang sale (ORN 50, Mitchel, 1977: 215).
The above evidence points to the importance of Penetanguishene as a fur trading centre into the 1860s and beyond. However, aside from the obvious participation of Andrew Mitchell it is hard to establish to what extent other Métis in the Penetanguishene area took part in this trade either as trappers or intermediaries. Also, although fur trading was conducted in the area up until 1881 (at least in the Thompson store) this trade seems to have declined steadily after the 1840s in the Upper Great Lakes area.

The export of furs from the Great Lakes region actually increased during the 1830s and 1840s, but the persons harvesting furs tended to be newly-arrived farmers who hunted around their farms and used furs as a way to supplement their incomes. Thus, voyageurs and bourgeois were no longer needed to trade for the furs and transport them. Also, merchants from the eastern seaboard appeared in the Great Lakes region and bought furs directly from these farmers and the Indians. They usually paid cash, and this ended the earlier credit system that traders used with the Indians. [...] The Métis were forced during this period to find new employment as the fur trade declined. The bourgeois usually had the education and resources needed to do well in these changed circumstances (Jung, 1987).

A newspaper article of 1851 reports that, although the fur trade was the main industry of Penetanguishene on the arrival of the voyageur and Métis population, it rapidly dwindled.

These people (from Drummond Island) [...] were in business as storekeepers or fur traders, the only trade of business that was carried on with any degree of success. A few of the Canadians, on their arrival, commenced to clear the woods and farm, but from their former manner of life have not succeeded well. On the first settlement of the place, furs were found in abundance and for some years after four or five thousand pounds worth were taken annually. This trade employed many men, who were sent off to the Indian hunting grounds about the months of August and September and returned the following spring, being away about nine months. Their labor in searching (marching?) and going after the Indians would frequently be excessive and their food as hard as their labor. On their return they would be pretty much as a sailor after a long cruise and their hobbies would be spent in drinking, dancing and feasting. This carried on for three months of the year produced much dissipation and extravagance which had a decidedly bad effect upon the people generally.

The animals taken in the chase and whose furs were of great value consisted of beaver, otter, martin, mink, muskrat, fishers, bears and foxes with a few others of less note and value. The skin of the black fox is the most beautiful and valuable, as also for its rarity – a skin frequently selling from £10 to £20. The fur trade has now dwindled down to a few hundreds annually. The prices of furs taken here are higher than in other parts of the Upper Province as they are generally of a better quality; the quality improves as they are caught further north (Barrie Magnet, 1851).

In a letter dated May 30, 1865, written by William Simpson from Penetanguishene to his son John W. Simpson in Montreal, he remarks that: “[…](illegible name) has sent down his furs
but I am sorry to say the amount is very small, not so much as last year” (Simpson, PAO, 1864-1899).

The 1871 Census lists only one voyageur descendant as having sold one bear skin (Marchand, 1989: 63).

In summary, the fur trade industry existed in Penetanguishene up until the latter half of the nineteenth century but those Métis that participated in it chose, or were forced to either move away from the area or take up other occupations.

4.2 First Nation language and English Interpreters

The use of the French and First Nation languages by the Métis is one of their original distinctive features. Michael Labatte states that:

My mother's name was Louisa Cadotte, a Chippewa, from whom I learned the Indian language. I was the eldest of a family of three children, two brothers and one sister, the others being dead. Nothing but French and Indian was spoken at Drummond Island. I learned English at Penetanguishene, where I first heard it spoken (Osborne, 1901: 138).

According to William Simpson, on Drummond Island there were 75 French voyageurs and their families, and all could speak enough Ojibway to barter (Praxis, 2000: 90).

For the Métis, raised in a multicultural and multilingual context, it was quite natural that they should be called upon to act as interpreters between Whites and First Nations people. It was the case for several Penetanguishene Métis, for instance William Solomon and later his son, Henry (Marchand, 1989: 39-40). The only official interpreters noted in the historical record are those who were paid for their services by the government, notably by the Indian Department, like the Solomons, Charles Langlade, or John Bell.

Louis Chevalier is listed as an interpreter in dealings with the Beausoleil Island First Nation band in August 1845 (Croft, 2001: 297). The Praxis report notes that:

Analysis of internal ‘adhesion’ to the Robinson Huron treaty negotiated at Penetanguishene following the main negotiations at Sault Ste. Marie indicates that a local métis acted as interpreter (Praxis, 2000: 142).

The Métis, doubtless, often also acted as interpreters in an informal capacity as well. However, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as First Nations people became more and more able to speak English, their services as interpreters were less required.

4.3 Fishing

Although there is much evidence of the existence of a commercial fishery in Georgian Bay and Lake Huron throughout the 1800s, fishery records are very partial and few in number. The information that exists is mostly statistical, listing for example total catches, or numbers of licenses, so they give us little information on individuals. Even the names and testimonies of individual fishermen that went before the two fishery enquiries held about the Georgian Bay fishery in 1893 and 1905 seem to be hard to locate.

As well, in the fishing license records that we were able to find, often the names of Métis or French-Canadian individuals have been corrupted to the point of being hard to identify. Since many of these records are hand-written, consisting of notes and summaries by overseers, they are difficult
to read and decipher. Thus, even if we were not always able to find Métis names in these records it should not be taken to mean that they weren’t participating in the fishery.

John Peters, in his thesis paper on the Lake Huron fishery, notes that, at the beginning of the 19th century: “The settlements around the lake were predominantly scattered bands of Indians, halfbreeds and the traders of various fur companies” (Peters, 1981: 22). Commercial fishing in the Upper Great Lakes originated in the Sault Ste. Marie area, as described by Peters:

Incipient commercial fishing began with the declining productivity of the fur trade about the upper lakes. The American Fur Company salted its first known barrel of whitefish in 1809 and made a trial shipment from the Sault Ste. Marie area to Detroit, but the War of 1812 slowed the commercial development of the resource (Askin 1926, 592). The first commercial fisheries of the Duck Islands district (OH1) and the Sault Ste. Marie area (western corner NC1), both along the American border, were placed on a firmer foundation in the 1820s. The declining production of furs in this area led the traders and merchants to seek out a replacement resource (Peters, 1981: 26).

Fishing was already being carried out in Penetanguishene Bay at the beginning of the century. Lewis Solomon, quoted by A. C. Osborne, states that on his arrival in Penetanguishene in 1829: “The town site of Penetanguishene was then mostly a cedar swamp—with a few Indian wigwams and fishing shanties” (Osborne, 1901: 129).

Several sources point to the beginnings of the commercial fishery in Georgian Bay in the 1830s, notably John Barry.

The Bay fishermen at first were mainly voyageurs from Penetanguishene and Indians, and the catch was for local consumption or was salted and sold to fish dealers who came around in small vessels. Fishermen from Penetang were at work in the 1830s (Barry, 1968: 105).

According to Peters, the early fur merchants on Lake Huron:

[...] began exploiting the fishery as a natural replacement for furs. They used the same local Indian and former white employees to produce salt fish for shipment south, instead of furs. The northwestern corner of Lake Huron developed in this way into a core district of commercial fishing before 1840. [...] In contrast, the growth of the fishery on the southern shores of Lake Huron proper (OH3, 4, 5) and lower reaches of Georgian Bay (GB4, 5) was facilitated by American coastal traders who accepted fish and other staple commodities for their American manufactured goods which they imported duty free throughout the upper lake. [...] Commercial fisheries were reported at Point Edward (OH5), Fishing Islands (OH3), Big Bay and Nottawasaga Bay (GB4) in the 1830s (Peters, 1981: 27-28).

On the subject of fishing, the Praxis report noted that:

Fishing appears to have been an important subsistence and commercial activity in the Penetanguishene area. Apparently when the Drummond
Islanders arrived at Penetanguishene, they found the present town site “dotted with log shacks of fishermen and a number of Indian wigwams” indicating that “the bay’s best fishing ground was at the end [of Penetanguishene Bay” (Doc. #63: 12, insert added; cf. Doc. #46: 129). Antoine Lacourse and Tontine Martin are identified as two of the “fishermen from Penetanguishene” whose “fisherman’s cabins” were present in the area when the Drummond Islands [sic] arrived at Penetanguishene in 1828 (Doc. #46: 145) (Praxis, 2000: 82).

In our earlier work we also noted the importance of the fishery for the Métis in Penetanguishene in the 1830s. In 1832, several voyageurs miss the visit of reverend Bennett since at that moment they are gone fishing. Penetanguishene parish priest, Amable Charest, in writing to his bishop in 1839, notes that, for his parishioners, fishing is their only source of income (Marchand, 1989: 41).

The Georgian Bay Fisheries Commission set up by the Government of Canada, investigated the commercial fishery on Georgian Bay, and held public hearings in 1904 and 1905. The Commissioners visited a number of communities including Lafontaine, Penetanguishene, and Midland and heard testimonies from fishermen on the state and the problems of the fishery. In its remarks on the history of the fishery, the Commission’s report noted that in the beginning:

[...] quite a trade was carried on with the Indians by the Hudson Bay Company’s posts, a number of which were established at various points in the bay, notably at Penetanguishene, La Cloche and Missassauga. This plenitude of fish continued down to the year 1850, that is up to the time when the white man began his operations on an extensive scale, there was an abundance of the valuable fish named (Canada, 1908: 2).

The same report noted that the origins of the commercial fishery on Georgian Bay dated back to 1834. “The gill net fishery in Georgian Bay began about the year 1834. It was prosecuted from canoe and small boats” (Canada, 1908: 7).

Alethea MacLaren notes about the early fishery on Georgian Bay, that:

The earliest gear used was the Indian’s gill net, made of cedar withes woven together to form a mesh 6 or 7 inches across. By 1834, white men had begun to fish in Georgian Bay using cotton and linen gill nets with stones for sinkers and pieces of cedar for floats, and fishing from canoes and small boats (Frick, 1965: 150).

Historians Joseph and Estelle Bayliss also point to 1834 as a pivotal year for the fishery and mention the participation of the Métis in it.

Following 1834, there was a general decline in the fur trade. [...] In 1837, 5,500 barrels of whitefish and trout were taken on Lake Superior by the American Fur Company. [...] The fishing trade thus became lucrative, and French, Indians and half-breeds alike were employed in it (Bayliss, 1938: 147).
According to Margaret Beattie Bogue, commercial fishing on the Great Lakes remained fairly limited until the late 1830s, when the participation of American businessmen gave it a new dimension.

Detroit entrepreneurs exploited Canadian waters during the 1830s. They fostered a gill-net fishery involving canoes, small sailboats about twelve feet long, and homemade hand-knitted linen nets in Georgian Bay, Canada’s finest Great Lakes fishing ground, which was richly endowed with whitefish and trout. Detroit traders brought schooners to the fishing stations to collect the catch and to supply needed salt and barrels. The fisherman took general supplies in payment for the salted catch (Bogue, 2000: 30).

In 1836, Frederick Ingall, an officer stationed at Penetanguishene, mentions the presence of two fishermen at Thunder Bay in Tiny Township.

The peninsula which lies W. of Penetang, and comprises the greatest part of the township of Tiny, is a beautifully diversified tract of hilly country watered in the interior by several lakes and small streams: the soil is in many places of excellent quality but occasionally encumbered with boulder stones. There are but one or two settlements in all this tract with exception of the Canadian settlers opposite the village formerly mentioned. There is also but one road, or rather portage, of any great extent and this passes from the Canadian Settlement to Thunder Bay, a deep and extensive inlet facing the north. It is called in Indian “Manitoueguash” or “the great Evil spirits’ Bay” [...] The shores of the bay [Thunder Bay] are elevated: and at the part of the hill, where the path terminates is a fine sandy beach; and close to the water side one or two Canadian fishermen have established themselves, shut out as it were from all direct communication with the settlements (Ingall, 1836: 15).

These fishermen must undoubtedly be the Labatte’s, a Métis family, the only known residents of Thunder Bay at that time, as Antoine Labatte noted in his narrative to A. C. Osborne (Osborne, 1901:145).

An economic geography thesis by W. P. T. Silva describes the growing importance of the fishery for people along Georgian Bay.

Fishing, lumbering and manufacturing also shaped the early economic geography of the southern Georgian Bay area. The large quantities of whitefish and lake trout in the waters around the fishing islands in Lake Huron attracted commercial fishermen in the early 1830s (ORN 3) and by 1850 Southampton, Kincardine and Owen Sound were probably all fishing ports.

(note 3: In 1834, for example, a gentleman by the name of Alexander MacGregor of Goderich entered into contract with an American Company to catch and deliver at least 3,000 barrels of fish a year (Silva, 1966: 76).)

In one of our previous works, we noted that the 1846 Smith’s Canadian Gazetteer listed Frank Colombus as the head of a fishing flotilla of four boats (Marchildon, 1984: 107). However, this fleet belonged to a Métis, Andrew Mitchell, as Bayfield recounts:
Andrew Mitchell followed his steamer enterprise [in 1832] with a fleet of fishing boats—the “Minnie Mitchell”, the “Pearl Mitchell”, the “Mermaid” and the “Ducks” which were managed for him by Frank Colombus (Bayfield, 1982: 36).

Thus this operation must have started some time after 1832 and required employees, most likely Métis labour.

The Praxis report also brings to light examples of commercial fishing in the 1840s and 1850s.

A report by the Deputy Provincial Surveyor ca. 1844 indicated that: “Great quantities of fish, salmon, trout, herring, &c. &c.; are, at certain seasons of the year, caught in the Bay, at the north end of [Tiny] Township” (Doc. #15: 2).

In August 1856, W.H.E. Napier was instructed by R. T. Pennefather, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to examine the islands on the North Shore of Georgian Bay. Napier’s report, dated 1 December 1856 provides one of the best accounts of the natural resources and harvesting activities for the Georgian Bay study area during the mid-19th century period (Doc. #23). Napier travelled from Toronto to Penetanguishene where he “completed my complement of men and provisions”, and while it is possible that he hired métis guides and boat-men, this is not specified. Napier spent approximately a month surveying the islands in Georgian Bay, and his report provides detailed descriptions of each island he surveyed, many of which were established fishing stations (Praxis, 2000: 81).

The same source quoted by the Praxis report notes that Penetanguishene fishermen regularly harvested in the Parry Sound area:

...in the month of October every year numbers of fishermen from Penetanguishene and other points congregate upon these Islands to fish for salmon trout... The fish are caught in nets, are of a superior quality, while later in the autumn the white fish is taken in great quantities... These fisheries then are very valuable and if protected and divided into stations which could be leased to companies or private parties would form a source of revenue to the Indians (Doc. #23: 36-37, Praxis, 2000: 83).

Finally, the same report later mentions that:

[...] from the 1830s-1870s, many voyageurs and their descendants were occupied as fishermen, some at the commercial level. In the 1850s, an Indian Affairs report stated that men from Penetanguishene went as far as Shawanaga Islands (north of Parry Sound) to harvest seasonal catches of trout (Praxis, 2000: 147).

Silva presents recorded evidence of fish being shipped out of Penetanguishene in the 1850s and offers an explanation to why fish were more lucrative than other natural resources.
Few data for shipments by water are available but it is recorded that in 1854, 365 barrels of fish were shipped from Penetanguishene and Southampton to the United States. Although fishing was not one of the principal economic activities in the area in this period, fish were exported fairly regularly and fishermen were apparently prosperous. Why this activity was more able than others in the area to surmount the barrier of isolation is not entirely clear, but it may be that because barrelled fish were worth more per pound than, for example, wheat or timber, they were more likely to stand the cost of shipment along poor roads; or that fishermen living in the ports were in a better position than most farmers to capitalize on the arrival of a ship (Silva, 1966: 77).

In a request for a lockup house for Penetanguishene, the municipal council of Tiny and Tay Townships alluded to the occupations and bad habits of its citizens:

On February 15, 1856, a Special Committee of the Council of the United Townships of Tiny and Tay petitioned the Governor General of British North America as follows: “The Memorial of the Municipal Council of Tiny and Tay in Council assembled Hereby Sheweth: That the Town of Penetanguishene is composed of parts of the Townships of Tiny and Tay. [...] That it is frequented by a class of persons who gain a livelihood by hunting and fishing, and who from habits and training are prone to escapes” (Tiny Township, 1995: 167).

It is thus clear that, from the very beginning of the commercial fishery in the Upper Great Lakes, some Métis participated as fishermen, but the extent of their participation remains very difficult to quantify since, prior to the implementation of the licensing system, and the beginning of the census, fishermen were not listed anywhere.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, commercial fishing would become a large scale industry in Georgian Bay fueling economic growth.

A change took place after 1855. For the next fifty years or so the large scale utilization of the local resource [fish] led to a considerable expansion in the different economic activities. This expansion manifested itself in the growth of towns, particularly the ports. [...] The figures show that until 1891, the urban population in the region expanded at a rate that was higher than the provincial average, reflecting in part the lag in urbanization but also the generally vigorous growth of the local economy. Although after 1891, the rate of growth in the region started to lag behind the provincial average, the ports along the southern Georgian Bay coast continued to grow rapidly and between 1891 and 1911, their population collectively increased at a rate that exceeded the provincial average by 11 per cent. After 1911 and until 1931, the rate of urban expansion in the region slowed down considerably and the gap between the province and the region widened sharply (Silva, 1966: 7-8).

Silva also notes that:
[... ] with the improvements in transportation and an expansion in markets in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the forests and fisheries began to be exploited on a commercial basis and as a result fishing and lumbering provided employment and brought wealth to the areas. This role in the economic development of the area increased until the turn of the century when the depletion of their resource base set in (Silva, 1966: 20).

In his brief historical sketch of the commercial fishery as it existed and evolved in Georgian Bay, James Barry notes the change.

When the railway arrived at Collingwood in 1855, commercial fishing increased considerably, particularly on the adjoining Nottawasaga Bay. By 1857 John Disturnell could announce in one of his guidebooks, “Immense quantities of fish are taken in the waters of Nottawassaga [sic] Bay, being principally carried to the Toronto market,” and he quoted an estimate that the yearly value of the catch was £40,000. [...] In the mid-1870s the total combined yearly catch of whitefish, lake trout, and yellow pickerel was over two million pounds (Barry, 1968: 105 and 110).

The 1850s also marked a change in how the resource was viewed. It rapidly became an issue for government. The first laws governing the fisheries in Ontario, the Fisheries act of 1857 and 1858, stipulated that every net and fishing operation must be licensed and that fishing stations on Crown land must be leased (Peters, 1981: 48). Furthermore:

[... ] the act of 1858 declared that the government could license or lease fisheries for periods of up to nine years. Prior to 1857 the Great Lakes fishery was treated as a “public right” vested in the public and not in the crown; consequently the government had not leased or issued licences of occupation to crown lands that fronted on desirable fishing sites. [...] By declaring its right to lease fisheries, the government put itself in a position to limit the number of fishermen and thus to prevent overfishing (McCullough, 1988: 20).

However, after Confederation in 1867, there was constant wrangling between the Ontario provincial government and the federal government over jurisdiction, and this lasted up until the beginning of the 1900s (Bogue, 2000: 179-180).

Once this new system was put in place, many Mêtis and First Nation fishers who did not take out licenses were considered by the authorities to be breaking the law. They were not alone, as Peters notes: “Most of the fishermen apparently ignored the regulations, unless the overseer was in the immediate vicinity. Illegal activity continued to be reported in every district from 1858 to 1878” (Peters, 1981: 50).

The same author states that the:

Implementation of licences on Lake Huron brought to the surface the unresolved conflict between traditional fishing grounds and these commercial activities. [...] The tensions led to conflicts between the licensed commercial fishermen and Indians. For example, when the government leased the
traditional Indian fishery at Lonely Island to a French fisherman in 1862 the angry Indians burned him out (Peters, 1981: 48).

In fact this incident involved two Métis fishermen, Jean-Baptiste Proulx and Charles de la Ronde. These fishermen were described as having “old resident fishermen” status according to the Fisheries Act (Journals, 1863). In July of 1863, this incident was to lead to more tension and the presumed murder of fishery overseer William Gibbard. The overseer, with 12 armed constables went to Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, to arrest the First Nation men deemed responsible. He met with resistance and although an arrest was eventually made, during the return trip Gibbard disappeared from the boat. His body was found, and though it contained no marks of violence, it was thought that he had been pushed overboard (Croft, 2001: 483, transcription of the article, “The Invasion of Manitoulin Island” July 30, 1863 as printed in the Globe and Mail).

The growth in the fishery continued despite the necessity to take out licenses.

As the fisheries grew into a significant commodity of exchange, more settlers became at least seasonal fishermen. By 1856, fall fishing by the settlers of Simcoe and Grey Counties on southern Georgian Bay had become a well established commercial activity as far north as Shawanaga Island in GB3 (Peters, 1981: 28).

A map of fishing stations on Lake Huron and Georgian Bay prepared by John Peters indicates the Eastern shore of Georgian Bay as a known fishery circa 1864, and Penetanguishene as a fishing station between 1870-1878 (Peters, 1981: 25). In the southern districts of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, the fishing stations which were still active in the 1870s were more than thirty years old (Peters, 1981: 30).

A 1965 report on the economic aspects of the Great Lakes fishery gives an idea of the scope of the fishery in the late 1860s:

Most of the Georgian Bay catch of 100 years ago was salted, the fishermen being supplied by dealers with salt and barrels, and it was an important source of food during this year for the growing city of Toronto. According to the 1868 Report of the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries, some 450 men were engaged in the Georgian Bay fishery at that time and the catch consisted of 1.2 million lb of whitefish, 707 thousand lb of trout and 8 thousand lb of pickerel (Frick, 1965: 151).

These 450 licensed fishermen on Georgian Bay accounted for a quarter of the total of 1,855 registered in Ontario in 1868 (McCullough, 1988: 110).

John Barry presents information on the commercial value of the Georgian Bay fishery at the time.

About 1858 […] Commercial fishing at Collingwood was bringing in £40,000 a year. […] An 1867 description said, “The average daily take exceeds 1,000 fish, weighing from 1 to 40 lbs. each, and are carried principally to the Toronto market” (Barry, 1992: 152).

William Simpson, the father of Métis children, participated in the fishing industry, although probably not directly. His name is on a fishing license dated April 28, 1862, at Collingwood and issued to him, Alfred A. Thompson and Stephen Jeffrey of Penetanguishene by the Federal
Government for fishing between Matchedash Bay and Head Island. The three paid $50, and it is noted that they caught 1,880 pounds of fresh fish (trout, whitefish and herring), and that they pickled 596 pounds of fish, with a value of $2,948.50. The fresh fish had a value of $ 94 (Simpson, PAO, 1862). It is highly unlikely that the three people named on the license, all businessmen in Penetanguishene, did the fishing themselves, and therefore they must have hired others to fish with their license.

In a letter by William Simpson from Penetanguishene, dated May 30, 1865 to his son John W. Simpson in Montreal, he remarks that his other son, “[... ] David is going it strong in the Fishing concern (?). I hope he will come out alright” (Simpson, PAO, 1864-1899).

The 1860-1861 Population Census for the Townships of Tiny and Tay Including the Agricultural Returns and the Reformatory contains the names of five Métis that give their occupation as fisherman. These are: Dominique, Louis-G., Antoine and Francis Lebatt (Labatte) and J.-B. Trudeau (Patterson, 1992). Ten years later:

[...] in 1871, fishing is still an important occupation among the descendants of the voyageurs included in the census data for that year. At this time, eight of them own a total of thirteen boats (of which six are used for fishing), compared to four boats owned by their neighbours from Lower-Canada. The volume of fish caught by them is equally greater than that of their neighbours (ORN 24: Marchand, 1989: 41). (Our translation)

Original French:
[...] en 1871, la pêche demeure une activité importante parmi les descendants de voyageurs relevés dans les recensements de cette année. À cette date, huit d’entre eux possèdent un total de treize bateaux (dont six sont utilisés pour la pêche), comparativement à quatre bateaux chez leurs voisins d’origine bas-canadienne. Le volume de leur pêche dépasse également celle de leurs voisins (24).

In 1876, a poetical directory of Penetanguishene listed seven Métis fishermen.

Seven Young Fishermen in Penetanguishene
Charles Longlad and his brother Joe,
John Precore and John Gero,
Henry, Aleck, and Fred Duzome
Are catching fish and bringing home
Like merry sportsmen fond of fun. [...]
(Poetical Directory, 1876).

Peters notes that, prior to 1850, the number of people working in the fishery was not recorded and fluctuated considerably. However, in 1875: “Georgian Bay, GB2 and GB5 [the latter encompassing the Penetanguishene area] each reported less than 20 employees; Parry Sound District an average of 75 men” (Peters, 1981: 41).

In the 1860s and 1870s the development of rail transportation and freezers allowed the fishing industry to expand further. By rail, fish could be shipped quickly to markets. Icing facilities started to appear in communities along Georgian Bay, as was the case in Midland in 1875 (Peters, 1981: 44). Demand for fish also grew during the time of the American Civil War (1861-1865) when prices received by fishermen were apparently greater than ever before (Silva, 1966: 123). The export market for Georgian Bay fish was considerable and, with the new technology, trade in barrelled and salted fish was replaced by fresh fish.
No more than roughly a tenth of the total catch was consumed locally. The balance was sent by rail to the different urban centres in Ontario or shipped to markets in the United States (Silva, 1966: 122).

The last quarter of the 19th century marked a sharp rise in the fishery as the other Great Lakes started to produce less. There was, as Bogue points out:

[...] an exodus to more productive waters, notably Georgian Bay, Canada’s richest Great Lakes fishing ground. There in 1875, 6 tugs worked the waters along with 264 sailing craft, using 2.6 million feet of gill nets. By 1894, the gill-net fleet had expanded to 32 tugs (about half the total reported for all Canadian Great Lakes water) and the number of sailboats to 345 (Bogue, 2000: 49).

As well, the increasingly industrial nature of the fishery, and the participation of large, and mostly American, companies changed the rules of the game for the smaller participants which would have included the Métis.

They [First Nations people] worked in the commercial fishing business of the American Fur Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company on Lake Superior and may have operated small fishing boats independent of either in the 1840s suggests Robert Doherty. His research in the federal census records revealed that in 1860, as the fishing operations in the Hudson’s Bay Company on Lake Superior were drawing to a close, 112 of 190 fishermen in Mackinac County, Michigan, were Indians, “mostly mixed-bloods,” nearly 40 percent of whom owned no property and the balance, modest amounts. They were small poor fishermen, on the whole less well off than their white counterparts. Obviously, the propertyless group worked as fisher-laborers or fished on shares for commercial fishers (Bogue, 2000: 77).

The increasingly capital-intensive nature of the fishery through the late 1800s and early 1900s required significant investments. This would relegate those fishermen without capital to the lower-income jobs.

Bogue quotes Ludwig Kulien who, in 1880, wrote:

In some localities, particularly at the west end of Lake Superior and in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie, the Straits of Mackinac, and Saginaw Bay, many pure and half-breed Indians are employed. At Sault Ste. Marie, Indians are the principal fishermen. In the majority of the towns the nationalities are very mixed (Bogue, 2000: 80).

Bogue makes reference to participation of the Métis in the fishery.

In Canada, the fishermen were principally Canadian-born — second generation of British Isles origin, French Canadians, métis, and Indians — most of whom fished the waters of Lakes Huron and Superior. When the Dominion Fishery Commission interviewed Great Lakes fishermen in 1892 and 1893, most of those who participated in the investigation identified themselves as Canadians either by birth or by naturalization. [...] The rosters
of persons securing fishing licences in the 1890s found in the unpublished records of the Department of Marine and Fisheries confirm the dominance of Canadian-born fishermen of British Isles extraction and French Canadians in the ranks of Great Lakes fishermen and the frequent presence of Native North Americans [...] (Bogue, 2000: 81).

As well, she later indicates that: “notable examples of fishing communities with a distinctive ethnic base include [...] the métis communities of northern Georgian Bay” (Bogue, 2000: 83).

Historians of the fishery describe the large companies of the time employing fishermen and monopolising the industry to a large extent. One of these entrepreneurs was Charles W. Gauthier.

In the early eighties commercial fishing was begun in a large way by C. W. Gauthier of Windsor, who had Detroit financial backing. A gaudy lithograph issued at the time, of which a few copies have survived, shows the fishing fleet and establishment on one of the Duck Islands off the south shore of Manitoulin. The Gauthier venture was at first a success, but equipment was so increased that interest on the investment eventually swamped the promoters (Landon, 1944: 135).

Gauthier, who obtained a fishing license for his Duck Islands operation between 1879 and 1884 (Bogue, 2000: 223), had, in 1884, 200 employees and $ 200,000 in capital invested (McCullough, 1988: 53). Gobeil alludes to the fact that Métis worked for Gauthier’s company, although this does not seem to be documented.

It was among the residents of Drummond Island and the Great Manitoulin Island, like opposite river banks, that for a long time were chosen a good many voyageurs, lumber jacks, drivers and raftsmen. They were very good hunters and fishermen, and a certain number of them will earn an honourable living when Mr. C. U. (sic) Gauthier, for example, from Windsor, sets up his large commercial fisheries, with big capital from Detroit. An entire fleet of fishing boats and considerable commercial establishments will be erected on one of the Duck Islands, south of Manitoulin Island (Gobeil, 1956: 157).

In 1881, 88% of Ontario fishing licenses (2,296 out of 2,608) were given to Great-Lakes fishermen (McCullough, 1988: 110). The 1880s heralded the heyday of the commercial fishery on Georgian Bay which was to last about two decades. Silva describes this period.

Fishing during this period was carried on from all the ports in the area, Midland, Collingwood, Penetanguishene, Meaford, Owen Sound, Wiarton and Southampton, as well as from several stations such as Waubashene (sic), Victoria Harbour and Tobermory. The industry expanded rapidly in the 1880s due to the growing demand for fish both at home and abroad.
The biggest demand was for whitefish which was very highly prized and considered the most valuable commercial fish in Canada. (ORN 3). (Note 3: C. W. Gauthier, “Whitefish in the Great Lakes” Report on Lands, Fisheries Game and Minerals, Commission of Conservation, Canada, 1911, p. 147, in Silva, 1966: 151).

Descriptions like the one below, written in 1888, were encouraging the consumption and sale of whitefish.

The fish themselves are far finer specimens of trout, pickerel, bass and maskalonge, etc., than any to be found further to the south of us. Their flesh is firm and hard, a result undoubtedly of the cool and deep waters in which they were developed, whilst the flavour is simply delicious, and epicures combine in the assertion “that no finer flavoured fish exist than those which inhabit the water of the Georgian Bay” (Four years, 1888: 47).

By 1891, Silva notes that the whitefish catch in southern Georgian Bay:

[...] increased from approximately 71,000 pounds in 1883 to over 1.8 million pounds in 1891. This represented nearly 25 per cent of the total production in Ontario for that year. There was an increase along the Lake Huron coast as well but it was much less and amounted to only 37,000 pounds (Silva, 1966: 152).

However, the demand in the United States and political issues favoured American companies who became the major partners in the trade.

Fishing hit its peak in the 1890s. Canadian fishermen were forced to align themselves with an American buyer as a result of the 1891 American McKinley Tariff which placed a tax on Canadian fresh fish brought into the United States. Almost all fishermen on the North Channel sold their fish either to the Detroit Fish Company, the Buffalo Fish Company or the Booth Fish Company of Chicago who could circumvent the tax by claiming their product was American (Gutsche, 2002: XXXIV).

In 1893, the Collingwood board of trade boasted that:

In this industry [the fisheries] there is invested about $100,000 in boats, steam tugs, nets, and plant. The annual catch of fish amounts to about $125,000, and the number of men employed is about 250 [...] (Hodgson, 1894: 3).

The statistics for the period are impressive. Between 1881-1893 the number of fishermen went from 250 to 641, the record level (Peters, 1981: 75, Table 13) and most of these were operating in Upper Georgian Bay.

In 1881, the 250 fishermen employed on Georgian Bay represented a third of the 720 in all of Lake Huron. By 1894, the 641 fishermen on Georgian
Bay accounted for nearly 54% of the workforce of 1,192 fishing on Lake Huron (Peters, 1981: 75).

Samuel Fraser of Midland, testifying before the Dominion Fishery Commission in 1892, estimated that:

There were a thousand miles of gill-net used last year from Manitoulin to Midland, and around the bay north and south shores, some 1,170 fishing craft large and small, used in connection with the industry; 585 men were engaged, besides boys employed, in the fishing [...] (Wilmot, 1895: 238-239).

Peters analyses the shift in the type of boats used in the fishery between 1893 and 1913, when steam tugs replaced sail boats. In 1893, there were 222 fishing sailboats on Georgian Bay and 10 steam tugs. The number of sailboats continued to decline steadily. By 1913, there were 131 compared to 83 tugs on the Bay (Peters, 1981: 111-112).

The pattern of sailboat decline suggests the focus of capital shifting to the upper lake through this period [early 1900s]. Penetanguishene (GB5) and Point Edward (OH4) districts maintained large fleets of sailboats throughout the period, although they captured few whitefish or lake trout, suggesting that fishing for coarse fish species maintained these smaller operations (Peters, 1981: 112).

In northern Georgian Bay, in August 1893, J. C. Hamilton described a Métis family fishing at Rattlesnake harbour on Fitzwilliam or Horse Island:

There was a small shop, a fish-packing and ice house, two or three shanties, then a large tent occupied by a half-breed family the father a fisherman, with sons who aided him, and two pretty daughters, who have been at school at the Manitowaning convent, and are now remaining with the father who was a widower and likes to have his dear ones about him (Hamilton, 1893: 20).

This family is most likely that of Pierre Desjardins, born in Penetanguishene, who had become a widower in 1891 (McLay, 2005: 50).

It would seem that Métis, French-Canadian, First Nation and Catholic fishermen had to contend with prejudices on the part of some overseers in obtaining their licenses. Nelson Couture, a Georgian Bay fisherman of 22 years experience in Spanish (Wilmot, 1895: page CC) gives an example of this discrimination.

In a prepared statement made in the spring of 1894, Nelson Couture, a Georgian Bay fishermen (sic), reported that the overseer “has stated he has no use for Frenchmen and that he will soon drive them out of the fishing business on the north shore.” The Reverend J. Paquin, resident priest at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay, who ministered to reservation Ojibwes, complained to the Department of Marine and Fisheries that the overseer sometimes refused the Indians’ applications for fishing licenses (ORN 17). Indians living on reservations charged that the department under Conservative management violated their treaty rights and
From the Straits of Mackinac to Georgian Bay (2006)

either did not allow them to fish or circumscribed those rights by limiting the times and types of fishing. The allegations that the department displayed anti-Catholic and anti-French biases cannot be documented. Indeed, the record of licenses issued in the areas of Manitoulin Island, northern Georgian Bay, and North Channel includes those for many fishermen of part French, part Indian background. Catholic priests, such as Paquin, frequently interceded on their behalf. The Indians, though, were correct in their charges against the Department of Marine and Fisheries, which did exhibit a prejudicial attitude toward and legal unfairness in administering the law when Native North Americans were concerned (Bogue, 2000: 223-224).

Théophile Laboureau, the parish priest in Penetanguishene, played an active role in helping the fishermen of his parish, which no doubt included the Métis fishermen. As indicated in a letter in November 1884 to the fishery overseer, F.G.M. Frazer, in Victoria Harbour, Laboureau obtained free licenses for fishermen in the community.

Undoubtedly you are aware that for some years past I have had from the Government of the Dominion the privilege of recommending for licenses (theirs) to be obtained free [underline in the original] the persons living in this district and neighborhood whom I would think entitled to that favor (Laboureau, PAO, 1884).

The following year, Laboureau again wrote to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, asking him for leniency regarding the case of Gin Rock lighthouse keeper, William Baxter, caught fishing illegally. In his letter he mentions that:

 [...] in 1876 and ’77, when Mr. Smith also of New Brunswick was Minister of Marine and Fisheries, I felt it my duty as parish priest of the place here to ask of him the privilege to let the poor people here to fish with nets and hooks 2 lines without paying for a license. It was then hard times as now (Laboureau, PAC, 1895: 114).

Father Laboureau adds that Minister Smith at the time acceded to his request and that the fishery overseer gave free licenses to people on his recommendation. Because the men can’t find work and the winter that year is particularly severe, he notes that conditions are very hard.

I know people in this vicinity who are nearly starving, and who certainly are suffering and who are fishing without license, simply and literally to keep from starving, and who would have to be a burden on the community otherwise [...] (Laboureau, PAC, 1895: 115).

He goes on to say that, in the past, fishery overseers have interpreted the law loosely and allowed fishermen to obtain their permits later after the fishing season. Finally, he fears that should someone try to stop such desperate men from fishing, they might resist.

The relative poverty of fishermen in the southern Georgian Bay region in the late 1800s is mentioned by several people as the cause for some of the illegal fishing. John Anderson, in 1886 writing to the Deputy Minister of Fisheries in Ottawa, asked for permission to allow fishermen to fish catfish and bull heads in winter.
We are doing this principally to give our men work during the month of November, the close season for White fish and trout.

It is very hard for our fishermen to make a living in the winter if they are stopped (sic) in that month. We have made very extensive arrangements for the sale of these rough class of fish, and if we are successful in catching them it will be a great help to the poor in this vicinity; and also a protection to the trout and white fish, as it will be almost impossible to stop illegal fishing when starvation is staring them in the face (Anderson, PAO, 1886).

As noted by Frick:

The fisheries of Georgian Bay even as early as the turn of the century, were recognized as important, not only because of the quantity of the catch, but also because of the lack of alternative occupations in the region where much of the land was unsuitable for agriculture and only a limited amount of lumbering was carried on (Frick, 1965: 151).

J.C. Hamilton, quoting statistics supplied by the federal Department of Agriculture and Commerce notes that, in 1890:

In the fisheries of the Province [Ontario] 3045 men are employed, 436 being in the Georgian Bay, 427 in Lake Huron, and the Manitoulin section had 387. The Bay had the greatest number of fathoms of gill nets in use (Hamilton, 1893: 111).

These figures would indicate that Georgian Bay fishermen accounted for over 14% of all those in the province at that time.

An analysis of the 1891 Census data for Tiny and Tay Townships as well as Penetanguishene and Midland, show that, in these municipalities, there were a total of 64 men that declared fisherman as their occupation. Of this total, over a third, or 23 had Métis surnames: Precourt (1), Dusaume (5), Labatte (3), Lafrenière (1), Leroux (1), Lacroix (1), Perrault (2), Laramee (1), Prisk (Prisque) (8) (Census, 1891).

Although the Department of Marine and Fisheries records for Georgian Bay-Lake Huron only seem to exist for the period from 1892 to 1898, close scrutiny of these indicated commercial fishing licenses being issued to Métis fishermen.

These are, for 1893: John Lamondy, John Lamorie, Joseph Leroux, John Contieur, Peter Lagree, Jos. Busha (Boucher), Jos Créceau, Harris Contour, Peter Lagree; for 1894: James Larama, Henry Morreau, Corbman for Jos. Morreau, B. Secord, C. Beausoleil, Jno. Theneau (?), Wm Longlad, and Paul Brisette (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

More names are listed for the period 1894 to 1896. On December 31, 1894, the overseer F.J. Smith, notes the following names with the recommendation, “has fished for 5 years on receipts”: Jos Lacroix, Jos Criceau, Jos Lacroix, all of Lafontaine, and Geo J. Vent with note that he and Peter Labatt fished together. Other names entered for licenses at this date are: Ed Brissette, Lagree, [Legris], Boucher, Lemieux, Larrame, Contiour, Dusome, Lafriner (Lafrenière), Giroux, Labatt, Lamondin, Chas Vassair, Brunelle, Lacroix, Brasset, Limona, Martin, Larrose, Prisk, Lagrise, Maurice, Lamora, and Larama [Laramée] (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).
On January 16, 1895, the following: Jos Lacroix, of Lafontaine, Tuffield [Théophile] Brisette and Alfred Labatt, the latter both of Victoria Harbour, are listed as a “continuous fisherman” by overseer F.J. Smith. On February 24, 1896, Chas Vassair, Jos Martin, both of Midland, Benjamin Secord of Penetang are listed as a “continuous fisherman” by the same overseer. And finally, on April 10, 1896, Jos Lacroix, and Jn Laferner [Lafrenière] of Lafontaine are each listed as “continuous fisherman” by overseer F.J. Smith (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

Illegal fishing in the late 1800s was a preoccupation of the overseers in the southern Georgian Bay area. In his testimony before the Dominion Fishery commission in Midland on December 8, 1892, Samuel Fraser, fishery overseer was described as a: “resident of Midland since 1840, farmer, reeve of Tiny and Tay Townships and reeve of Midland, [...] who has been practically an official in connection with the fishery of Georgian Bay since 1875” (Wilmot, 1895: 231). Fraser was categorical in condemning the illegal fishing in Georgian Bay.

The fish caught in close season are sold to farmers and others by dealers. I do not think it would be any protection to the fisheries to cause pedlars and dealers to take out licenses. Every man here thinks the fishery laws a fraud; they are not in sympathy with the law. [...] The regulations are adhered to by the regularly licensed fishermen. The large amount of poaching, however, during the close season is done by settlers, half-breeds and Indians (Wilmot, 1985: 234-235).

A few years later, Fraser was again denouncing the illegal fishers, but this time supplying specific names, which included Penetanguishene Métis.

I deem it my duty to send you the names of the unlicensed fishermen residents of my division from whom the Messrs. Thompson of Penetanguishene have this year, I mean this fishing year just ended purchased fish. The greater number of these are able to purchase licenses but under the new order escape altogether, living as they do so near the north shore they run over there and do their fishing with the knowledge that it is not my duty to follow them there [...]

The following are the names handed me by the Thompsons. William Dusome, Frederick Dusome, Henry Dusome, Icon (?) Dusome, Peter Light, John B Grenier, John B. Quesnelle, Francis Perrault, William Beausoleil, J. Hodgson, Henry Beausoleil, Icon (?) Desroches, Felixe Beausoleil, Jos Crotteau (?), William Geroux, Antoine Labatte, Francis Labatte, Andrew Robillard, Narcise Bourron (?), I. Dusomme (?), F. Pelletier (Fraser, PAO, 1889).

Fishery records of the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries for 1894 contain a number of references to Métis fishermen both as licensed and illegal fishers. Chas Beausoleil is referred to as “a continuous fisherman” in a letter by overseer F.J. Smith, dated September 2, 1894, Midland, and the same overseer mentions Jno Lafermier [Lafrenière] who “fishes off Thunder Bay” in a letter dated September 17, 1894, Midland (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Overseer John Jackman, in a letter from Waubaushene dated April 23, 1894, declares:
Sir, you will please to find enclosed 5.00 for a gill-net license for P. Brissette. This is one of the men that used to help fish the seine here and is now doing nothing as the seines have been stopped (sic). It is likely that some of the other seine men will be applying for licences if they do not succeed in finding work in the mills here (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

The latter letter also alludes to the importance of the work in the lumber mills as a substitute for fishing. Another letter by overseer J. Smith from Midland, dated October 22, 1894, mentions five 25 dollar licenses given to:

- Jos Criceau (?) of Lafontaine to fish off Thunder Bay and Visinity (sic)
- Solomon Vallée of Lafontaine to fish off Thunder Bay & Visinity (sic)
- Ed Lemieux of Penetang you sent me his Licence no 1145
- Peter Lalond (?) of Midland to fish Mcnifs? Bay to Moose Point
- Francis Cont (?) of Lafontaine to fish off Thunder Bay & Visinity (sic)

The same overseer in a separate letter the same day mentions:

The applications of Vint & Labatt, C. W. Philips, Jos. Boucher, and Thomas Parr, are refused, and the money ($20) remitted on their behalf, is herewith returned.

You will ascertain if these men hold receipts from Jackson for fishing in previous years (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Smith, writing again from Midland, on October 25, 1894, mentions that:

In answer to your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing $25, you will find herewith Frs. Contures fishing license for you to countersign and deliver.

Respecting the applications of Joseph Criceau, Sol. Vallée and Peter Legris, being new ones cannot be entertained!

Enc. The amount of their fees $15, is herewith refunded. I am to again remind you to be very careful in recommending additional licenses when you are aware of so much illegal fishing having been carried on (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Smith’s correspondence, dated probably October 16, 1894, from Victoria Harbour, asks for “licences to fish off Mcrys (?) for Herring on behalf of J. Vint & Peter Labatt and for Jos Busher Penetang Muskoka and Visinity (sic)” (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894). On November 1, 1894, F. J. Smith requested licences for Peter Lagner (?), Jos Criceau, and Sol Vallée (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894). In a letter dated from Midland on November 6,
1894 by Acting Deputy Minister Marine and Fisheries to F. J Smith, the latter is instructed to give licenses to John Giroux and Ira Hill but to refuse licenses to Jos Legris, J. M. Adams, Jacob Giroux and Joe Modondguet.

The above name Giroux is the only applicant on your list who held a license in 1893. [...] Notwithstanding your assertion (sic) that the other applicants Jos Legris, J. M. Adams, Jacob Giroux and Joe Modondguet (?) are old fishermen, they have had no licenses from this Department for the last three years and are therefore new applications, which cannot be entertained (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

On November 30, 1894, F. J. Smith requests more fishing licenses for: Jos Criceau, Lafontaine, Peter Lagri (?), Midland, Sol Vallee, Lafontaine, and Jos Lagri?., Midland (with the note that “Jos Prisk as he is only a half brother to Peter Lagri (?) he is called LaGri (?) sometimes his name may be Books (?) as Prisks” (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

A few days later, on December 3, he again wrote to John Harder, the Acting Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in regard to the case of the same five fishermen. In this correspondence, he describes how the previous overseer issued receipts and not licenses to the fishermen, as well as the fishing practices of the First Nations and Métis (Indians and Half-breeds). This letter also gives us an indication of the money that fishermen have invested in their gear.

[...] they have not been in the Habit of paying their fee untill (sic) the overseer comes to them I have informed them all that in future their licence they will have to have before they go out at all of these men but five of them have even had or seen a Licence they have always been used to receipts & nothing else some of them have fished for 18 & 20 years never had but one or two licences in that time. What am I to do with such men as those in regard to granting them a licence another year when they have from $100.00 to $500.00 Invested in fishing gear but their are others that can be cut off without much conflab. I am of the opinion there are enough fishing in this division that need an amount of watching. [...] The Bass are mostly caught By Half Breeds & Indians by Driving they set short pieces of net accross the mouth of small bays & whip the water with long gads or withes. The Bass & Bull Heads are the only fish that protect their yong (sic) in these waters & they frequent Shoal Bays for warm water for the benefit of their yong (sic) (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

More correspondence, dated December 4, 1894, mentions fishery licenses, including one given to John Lafreniere...No. 1237. “[...] Lafreniere and French appear never to have fished under a license, Jackson’s receipt being their only authority” (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894). F. J. Smith, the same month, requests licenses for 1895 for 24 fishermen, including: Wm Giroux, Jos Criceau, Jos Leroux, and Jos Lacroix, all of Midland. On page 2 of this letter he notes that:

[...] they do not know of [...] their licence & their [...] is destroyed or worn out an (sic) but five of them that have licence this year & some have not had licence since Sam Frazers time. Carring their licence in their Boats thay (sic) get wet & are destroyed & thay (sic) do not seem to care. They all depend on their receipts. I will not Issue any more receipts Let their licence
be their receipts?? is that not the way the department intend to carry out the Law & any man found fishing without such licence his rig to be seized & reported to you. These men are all old Fishermen with from $200.00 to 650.00 & over but if their (sic) are doubts write me & I will try & rectify [...] (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Once again, this letter provides evidence of Métis fishermen designated as “old fishermen” with $200 to $650 invested in their equipment. A file dated March 28, 1895 contains 15 affidavits by fishermen, including that of Chas Beausoleil and Jos Larama regarding the payment of their license fees. Wm Longlad, is also mentioned in one document.

The number of licensed fishermen for the Midland area fluctuated greatly around 1894, due to the lack of diligence it would seem of John Jackson, the Fishery overseer of Midland at the time. In a “Memorandum re case of Jackson”, in May 1895, it was remarked that:

On 7th, June, 1894, Jackson was notified that it was currently reported that illegal trap net fishing was carried on in his Division, and he was asked to state if these reports were true, and to this he made no reply.

His attention at the same time was drawn to the fact that only 14 licenses had been issued by him for his Division, while for the same period in a previous year 34 licenses had been issued.

This enquiry was made necessary owing to a rumour that Jackson had collected money for licenses, for which he had failed to account (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

This would seem to indicate that, in the late 1890s, there were at least 34 licensed fishermen operating in the Southern Georgian Bay area. Affidavits were filed by local fishermen at the time to attest to the fact that they had paid for their licenses. Three of a number of such documents are filed by likely Métis fishermen.

I Ben Secor of the Town of Penetang do solemnly declare that I did on the 20 Day of April A. D. 1894 pay to Mathew (?) Gladstone Postmaster of the Town of Midland the sum of five Dollars being License fees as Follows 1 Boat & 3,000 4 ½ Gill net. Place of fishing Moose point to Watch shoals that such payment (sic) was made by me on my behalf for said Licence and I am informed by the said Gladstone that such money was by him forwarded to the late Fishing Inspector John Jackson at Waubaushene & I Make this solemn declaration conscientiously (sic) believing this same to be true & knowing it to be of the same force & effect as if made under oath & By Virtue of the Canada act of 1893.

Subscribed before me at Midland in the county of Simcoe this 24 Day of September A. D. 1894.
F. J. Smith F. O.

Ben Secor
his X Mark (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).
Another was filed on the September 25, 1894 by:

I C. Beausoleil of the Town of Penetang. I did on the 20th Day of April A. D. 1894 pay to Mathew (?) Gladstone Postmaster of the Town of Midland the sum of five Dollars for License fees as Follows
For 1 Boat & 6,000 Yds of Gill nets with 4 ½ in mesh, to fish off Moose Point to Watchers (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Jos Laramee filed one as well for the payment of one Licence including: “One boat with 3000 Fathoms of Gill Nets to fish in Georgian Bay between Point Masks & Bing Inlet” (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894). There were other such statutory declarations in the matter of “Fish Licenses for Wm Dusome, Jos Landrigan, Wm Longlade”.

In a letter by F. J. Smith dated Midland, January 22, 1895, the overseer stated that:

Jos Lagri (?) of Priss has fished for 12 or 14 years. L Brisson (?) (524) has fished for 4 years Jos Lerama (?) (324) has fished for 18 years also. [...]
Edmund Brassette (527) & H. Wright no 583 [...] they have dissolved & ask for two license (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894).

Still more pieces of correspondence from the Department of Marine and Fisheries list names of Métis fishermen. In 1895, M. Labatt is indicated as paying a $ 5 fine for illegal fishing (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

On October 14, 1895, overseer Smith writes that:

[...] the applicants and the Department in the case of Chars Vassair he has usually fished under Peter Legris licence and the two of them will not have more than 20# of ribb and thay (sic) only fish in the fall for Herring and in the winter Hooks for trout and pickrel (sic) & these men are willing to pay there (sic) Licence providing it will be granted to them [...] (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

Another of Smith’s letters, dated December 21, 1896, lists the following as owing money for their fishing licenses:

22nd January 1896 – no. 420 – T. Brassett, $5 [...]  
18th April 1896 – 1067 – Jos. Lacroix, $5,  
20th October 1896 – 1528 – Jos. Boucher, $5,  
20th October 1896 – 1527 – Jos. Murier, $5,  
21st October 1896 – 1537 – D. Lemonde, $5  
(Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

Métis fishermen are again mentioned in another of Smith’s letter, dated January 23, 1897:

In my schedule of Jany 23rd the application of Paul Brassett no 370- substituted Peter Labatt 371. Also Victor Macey 429- sub Felix Labatt 378. As I have made a mistake with the correspondance (sic) as I have already
applied for Brassett & Vict Macey on Jan 14th (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

Overseer Robert Edmonston, writing in Collingwood on October 12, 1898 refers to two Métis fishermen.

While in the Vicinity of Christian Island on the 11th of Oct. and going towards Hope island on Dolphin [the Department’s boat on Georgian Bay], We came across a fishing Skiff going to Sall-Cove Harbor belonging to Francis Labatt and Jos Lacroix of Thunder Bay and having a license no 526 from Overseer Smith of Midland, Mr Labatt was alone in the boat [...] I informed him that he must have a license to fish in (sic) division. And he said in the presence of Capt Pearson myself and others that Overseer Smith informed them in the spring that the license was good to fish anywhere (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895).

With regard to illegal fishing, overseers all over Georgian Bay point an accusing finger at Métis and First Nation fishermen from the Penetanguishene area several times. Overseer J. H. Elliot at Sault Ste. Marie, complained in September 1894 that:

 [...] is it only by prompt action on the part of the Dept. that this illegal fishing will be stopped. Large numbers of half breeds and others come up from Penetang in the fall to fish for white fish during the close season and the same in the spring for pickerel. Tons of the latter are caught and kept in ponds until after the 15th of May (Elliot, PAC, 1894: 42).

Overseer Smith in Midland was blatant about the extent of the illegal fishing and signals out one Métis, Marshall Labatt, in a letter written to John Handis, acting Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, dated May 4, 1895:

I have been back to Port Severn about the whole inhabitants of that town are more or less guilty of catching pickerel but it is very hard to (fasten?) it onto them close enough to impose a fine. I have an amount of names and when I get a little time I will attend to them. I cornered these yesterday and fined them $ 5.00 each. Gord Morrow, Antoine Morrow and Marshall Labatt they are not fishermen. There are some able farmers who have been selling the fish through the country (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894: 150).

In a Memo dated March 6, 1895, reference was made to Gin Rock lighthouse keeper, William Baxter, and three other men fined for fishing illegally (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895). Ironically, Baxter himself would turn informant for the overseer, three years later, as attested in a letter he wrote from his lighthouse on June 20, 1898, to denounce William Dusome, a Métis fisherman:

There is an island about 200 yards east of Gin Rock about the same size as Gin Rock.... It was reported to me several times last summer that a half breed named William Dusome was using a seine for catching fish off this island and although I kept a lookout (sic) for him I was never able to see him using
the seine but he was there much of his time. Now this summer this man has built a shanty on the island and along with three others has taken up his residence there (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895: 479).

Another lighthouse keeper in Killarney, Pierre Lamorandiere, a Métis descendant, aided the fishery overseers in their struggle against the illegal fishers. In 1893 he was personally threatened, and suffered losses and intimidation including having some of his hay set on fire.

Lamorandier was a very valuable fishery officer, given his tribal connections to the Ojibwes and his willingness to take a hard line on enforcement, even though it meant alienating the community and placing him and his family in jeopardy (Bogue, 2000: 235).

F. J. Smith in a letter dated October 8, 1896, writes about the illegal sale of salt trout and whitefish to traders in the French River area. He asked one of these, a Mr. Courtemanche:

[...] who was going to catch this fish for him. He told me Gord Gerou (?), William Gerou, two of Mr. Lamondines sons, one Prisk and his brother in law and others he did not remember their names. By what I can learn this type of trade has been going on for some years (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1895: 283).

Some Georgian Bay commercial fishermen in the early 1890s complained about First Nations and Métis fishermen in their testimony before the Dominion Fishery commission on the fisheries of the province of Ontario. In his testimony given in Owen Sound on November 26, 1892, John Nelson, a fisherman of 14 years in Meaford, declared that:

The fishermen follow the whitefish to the north shore in October. [...] The boats come from all parts of the country there, from Manitoulin Island, and all parts of the Georgian Bay. Half-breeds and Indians all congregate there to catch these spawning fish. The fishermen follow the fish all down from the north shore of the Manitoulin, and at this time the spawn is running freely from the fish (Wilmot, 1895: xxiii).

In answer to questions by the commissioners on the catch of whitefish on the north shore in September and October, the same fisherman gave the following answers.

Q. Where do the boats principally come from? - A. All parts of the country down off the Manitoulin Island, and from all parts of the Georgian Bay, and Manitoulin half-breeds and Indians. [...]  
Q. With your boat how many would you catch, in rough figures? – A. Upwards of four or five tons.  
Q. And would the other fishermen average that too? – A. Some of them would, and some more, and some less –the Frenchmen don’t generally have as big hauls as we do.  
Q. Do you know whether the Indians and half-breeds are fishing during the close season? – A. I could not say (Wilmot, 1895: 179).
Nevertheless, Nelson, referring to the situation in “the bays on the north shore”, expressed concern over illegal fishing done by First Nation and Métis people.

Q. After the spawning season is over there is no fishing done? – A. No, sir; not to my knowledge. The Indians and the half-breeds might have been fishing all summer for all that I know (Wilmot, 1895: 182).

Later, Nelson complained of nets being stolen in the same area.

A. [...] September, I think, is a very bad month in this part of the bay, and we have no protection against people stealing our nets. [...] In the summer parties come here – we do not know who they are – and steal our nets. [...] There were two lots of nets stolen between Mink Island and Campbell’s Rock it was supposed (sic) to be done by people from Penetanguishene. [...] Q. Is it strange that you never come across any of these parties? – A. You never can see them. We saw parties coming up from Penetanguishene, but didn’t know who they were (Wilmot, 1895: 197).

The same Commission heard testimony in Barrie, from John Hines, a labourer and fish warden on December 5, 1892.

This fishing [salmon-trout, whitefish and maskinongé], is extensively followed on the north shore of the Georgian Bay, at Thessalon and Bruce Mines. [...] we used to change with them and give them pork for fish; we get them from the Indians and half-breeds there. [...] There is extensive fishing going on now by parties living up here in Midland, Waubaushene and Penetanguishene – they fish a great deal, and they don’t stop at all, and didn’t stop, to my own knowledge, this year in the close season (Wilmot, 1895: 277-278).

The importance of the commercial and sport fisheries for the residents of the Penetanguishene area in the late 1800s was recognized by many, including one of the town’s prominent citizens, Charles Gendron, who wrote to Major F. Gourdeau of the Department of Marine and Fisheries on April 25, 1898 to exhort he and his officers to curtail the illegal fishing in Georgian Bay since:

The fish in these waters are of the greatest importance to the town and must be more important in the future as the lumber industry recedes as those two industries are our chief ones. Many of the people here depend for a living on (1) fishing (2) guiding tourists through these waters whose chief amusements and delight is fishing with hook and line. Now the loss of our fish means the loss of the fish themselves and also the loss of our chief inducement to the tourist (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894: 461).

Other Métis, on the Lake Huron side of the Bruce peninsula, were also engaged at the same time in commercial fishing. In an article about the Fishing Islands of Lake Huron, Pat McArthur relates how:
it is well known that the Metis families of the Saugeen territory resided periodically on the islands, fishing for themselves or others. A French family by the name of Martin was known to be at the Fishing Islands on March 17, 1838, when their son Henri, was born (McArthur, 2005: 77).

McArthur presents evidence of the existence of several Southampton (Lake Huron) and Owen Sound (Georgian Bay) Métis fishing families.

In October 1859, E. Boucher of Vail’s Point, in two hours caught with trolling tackle, 58 trout. ... On the 27th of the same month, round and amongst the islands at the mouth of Georgian bay, Indians and half-breeds were catching, with the trolling line, two to three barrels of trout per day (William Gibbard, Overseer of Fisheries for Lake Huron and Lake Superior, Sessional Papers, Third Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Province of Canada, 1860, 87, quoted in McArthur, 2005: 141).

Both Métis fishermen Gabriel Granville, junior and senior, died from tragic accidents as reported in newspaper articles, the younger being struck by lightening (article dated August 15, 1895) and the elder, hit by a boom and knocked into the water. The latter was described as “one of our oldest and best known resident fishermen” in an article in the Port Elgin Times on October 8, 1903 (McArthur, 2005: 98). McArthur notes that the elder Gabriel Granville:

[...] was born about 1837, the son of Augustin Granville Sr. and Marguerite Lange. [...] Gabriel was a fisherman also and at one time he operated a fishing vessel, Grand Trunk, out of Southampton according to the memories of John A. MacAuley found in the Bruce Archives (McArthur, 2005: 111).

McArthur adds that another son of Gabriel Granville senior, Augustin Richard “Gus” Granville of Southampton was “a well-known captain of fishing tugs on the Great Lakes [...]” (McArthur, 2005: 111). Also in Southampton, Frederick Foster Longe, born on March 14, 1892, was a fisherman in his native town (McArthur, 2005: 118).

On the other side of the peninsula, in Owen Sound, McArthur recounts how Métis families there underwent the transition from fur-trading to fishing.

[...] the early Owen Sound/Big Bay Metis community was comprised of Coutures, Lavallees, Desjardins, Jones, Blette/Sorrells, and their extended families, not named here. The community was connected to other communities all about the lake through marriage, custom and culture. As elsewhere, there were kinship ties to the local native village.

When the fur trade declined the families turned to what they knew best — the waters — and marine activities became their livelihood. Some became sailors and ship captains. While others like the Coutures, Lavallees, Jones, and Desjardins became renowned as the earliest and most experienced fishermen, guides, and hunters of the area (McArthur, 2005: 138).

The Couture family in particular distinguished themselves as fishers, beginning with Joseph Couture who married Mary Jones in the early 1850s (McArthur, 2005: 139). An obituary in the Owen Sound Times dated September 12, 1909, describes him thus:
Joseph Coture (sic), who figured in the French-Canadian element of this section for many years. [...] one of the original inhabitants of what was known as the French village, a hamlet which was strung along the shore of the bay [...] (McArthur, 2005: 141).

The Couture family also suffered tragic losses.

In November 1886, Joe Couture Jr. and his brother James were drowned in a violent storm, while heading for their fishing grounds during the late fall fishery. [...] The Couture family was known to be among the most skilful fishermen of the early French community, along with the Lavallees, the Desjardins, and Jones (Reminiscences of North Sydenham, A Retrospective sketch of the villages of Leith and Annan Grey County, Ontario, quoted in McArthur, 2005: 141).

The Couture family also comprised Rudy Couture Sr., a licensed gill net fisherman in Georgian Bay, and Frank Couture “a well known fisherman, having been engaged in that industry since he was 12 years of age, and [...] very successful” (McArthur, 2005: 144-145).

Finally, in the 1950s, the fourth generation of the Jones family was still fishing in Owen Sound (McArthur, 2005: 148-150).

On the east side of Owen Sound, the Métis families distinguished themselves:

The most courageous and skillful among these contestants (oarsmen) at Leith, however, all took off their hats to the men of the French village, a little hamlet of French-Canadian fishermen which flourished in the early days on the east shore of the bay, near Owen Sound.

...Three families of these fishermen stand out prominently in the early history of the bay; the Jones, the Desjardins and the Cotures. The water seemed to be their natural element, and this is particularly true of the Jones’ and Cotures [...] Young Joe was probably the best man in a fishing boat who ever sailed into Owen Sound harbour (Allan H. Ross, Reminiscences of North Sydenham, Richardson, Bond & Write, Limited, Owen Sound, 1924, pp. 178-179, quoted in McArthur, 2005: 150).

In a series of three petitions submitted by Lake Huron fishermen to the minister of Marine and Fisheries in the late 1890s, approximately a dozen of the 60 to 70 fishermen who signed them are Métis descendants from Owen Sound and Southampton. These fishermen sought to have the condition of their fishing licences changed so that:

[...] as formerly one license may be granted by your department for the whole of the waters of the said Georgian Bay without increasing the fee now payable [...] (PAC, RG23, vol. 280, file 2082, part 1, Reel T-3203: 35-38).

The Métis fishermen that signed this first petition dated March 11, 1897 were: Peter Desjardins, Lowis Desjardins, Charley Jones, Thomas Jones, Franck Boucher, John B. Desjardins, Frank Couture, Wm. Jones, Charley Couture, Joseph Jones, all of Owen Sound.
A second petition, dated April 15, 1898, requesting the same thing, had the following Métis fishermen among those that signed: Fred Longe, Joseph Longe, Edward Longe, Frank Grenvette (?), Peter Longe, Fred Longe, Agustus Granville, John Granville, and Wm Logre (?) all of Southampton (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, 1894: 58-60).

The third similar petition, undated, and submitted to John Costigan, minister of Marine and Fisheries, Ottawa, probably around the same years as the previous ones, included these Métis fishermen: Peter Desjardins, Edward Boucher, David Desjardins, Louis Desjardins, Hary Desjardins, Wm Jones (mark), Chas Jones Jun., Thomas Jones, Chas Jones Sen., John Desjardins, Charles Coutur, Frank Coutur, Joseph Jones, all of Owen Sound (Department of Marine and Fisheries, PAC, Reel T-3203: 9-13).

Although prosperous at the end of the nineteenth century, the fishery was plagued by a number of problems, the foremost being environmental. Intensive commercial lumbering was taking its toll on the Great Lakes and in particular on Georgian Bay. Bogue points to the American companies that: “were also responsible for the atrocity of enormous log rafts moving from Georgian Bay across Lake Huron to supply sawmills in Michigan, leaving a trail of destroyed nets and fishing grounds in their wake” (Bogue, 2000: 104).

The fishery followed a sharp curve that went up and then rapidly down as described by Silva:

The expansion that started in the 1880s continued until the early 1890s after which there was a sharp drop in production. The annual catch along the southern Georgian Bay coast declined from 4.6 million pounds in 1891 to 1.4 million pounds in 1910 due partly to the decrease in the numbers of whitefish. In 1891, the production of whitefish had amounted to over 1.8 million pounds; by 1910, this had declined to less than 150,000 pounds.

The principal reason for the collapse of the whitefish fishery was one policy of reckless exploitation in the 1880s and the early 1890s which led to a rapid decline in the numbers of whitefish in the Georgian Bay (ORN1: Silva, 1966: 153-154).

Of course, as the fish disappeared, so did the fishermen.

The collapse of the whitefish fishery led to a decline in the number of people employed in the fishing industry. In 1891, there were almost 500 fishermen in the southern Georgian Bay Fishery; by 1910 this had declined to fewer than 300. Much of the decline took place at Collingwood, Midland, Penetanguishene and Waubashene (sic). In 1891, they had accounted for 68 per cent of the catch along the southern Georgian Bay coast and 75 per cent of the employment; by 1904, their share of the catch had declined to 34 per cent and that of employment to 46 per cent (Silva, 1966: 157).

As Peters notes, between 1890 and 1915 the number of men employed by the industry was cut in half and: “The manpower of the fishery in southern Georgian Bay districts was reduced to less than one hundred by 1905” (Peters, 1981: 114 and 116).
An examination of the occupations of individuals in the 1911 Census in Tiny Township and Penetanguishene with the 21 surnames identified as definite Métis families in the Praxis report, revealed one person that gave fisherman as their principal occupation, François Labatte, age 68. This is in sharp contrast to the numbers noted in the previous two decades.

However, in the following years, fishing still seemed to be the occupation of a number of people in the Penetanguishene area and along the shore. For instance, this account from a person in Highland Point alludes to fishing as an economic activity.

In 1919 Millicent Lynn left her home in Lancashire England, to join her husband, George, in a strange place called Penetanguishene. It was Highland Point to be exact. [...] Life at Highland Point was a shock. George Lynn bought the farm from his father-in-law John Hoar, of the Royal Navy, who came to Canada after a distinguished naval career. Nothing taught him to pick good farm land. He chose a spot on Penetanguishene bay for its beauty, built a home [...] The land was no good for farming. Most of his neighbours scratched out a living fishing and working in the lumber trade (Haskill, 2002: 100).

The neighbours referred to here are most likely Métis descendants living in the vicinity of the original 20 acre park lots granted to their ancestors from Drummond Island.

In the 1920s and 1930s there are again some Métis names that appear among those being given commercial fishing licenses in Georgian Bay. The manuscript notebook of Neil MacNaughtan, who was the game and fishery overseer in the Parry Sound District from 1920 to around 1946, is part of the collection of the Ontario Archives. It lists the fishermen who were issued commercial fishing licenses between 1921 and 1930.

The names of fishermen receiving licences who have Métis names or are probable Métis descendants are: Brunelle, Contois, Labatt, Lacroix, Lamoranday (possible variant of Lamorandière or Normandin), LeBlanc, Leprieur, Light, Longlade, Massier, Michaud, Perrault, Prisque, Roque, Robillard, Robitaille, Secord, Solomon, Valley (MacNaughtan, PAO, F4330-3-0-1).

All the fishermen listed above were issued licenses for net yardage of either 6,000 yards or, in a few cases, 12,000 yards, a considerable amount, indicating that they were fishing for commercial purposes. The only rare exceptions to this rule are companies, for instance the Pilgrim brothers (48,000 yards) or Alex Kennedy (60,000 yards) both of Meaford.

The same source also supplies seizure reports for the periods from 1921 to 1926, and from 1931 to 1943. These contain the names of likely Métis descendants fined for fishing and hunting violations, notably: Messier, Perault, Prisque, Soloman, Lamonday, Trudeau, Longlade. For the first period, five fishing seizures and one hunting seizure involve people with these names. During the latter period, McNaughton reports nine fishing seizures, and seven hunting seizures of likely Métis. The Longlade family of Shawanaga is involved in seven of these incidents (MacNaughtan, PAO, F4330-3-0-7).

The sharp decline in the Georgian Bay fishery continued and accelerated during the period from the late 1940s to the beginning of the 1960s. Statistics show that the number of fishing boats on Georgian Bay went from 200 in 1946, to approximately 100 in 1961. As well, the number of fishermen dropped from 379 to 100 during the same period (Frick, 1965: 138). The sharp decline in commercial fishing in Georgian Bay in the 1960s was a consequence of the effect of the accidental introduction of sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. As Barry notes in regard to the total catch on Georgian Bay:
From then [the mid-1870s] until the 1950s it fluctuated between two and seven million, and registered six million pounds in 1953, most of it whitefish. After that it declined sharply; by 1960 the total was not quite 98,000 pounds. It then rose slightly. The 1965 figure was 243,000 pounds (Barry, 1968: 110).

In summary, the historical evidence points to the existence of a commercial fishery in Georgian Bay as of the 1830s and Métis participation in this industry throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although the extent of this participation is difficult to ascertain, the historical record shows fishing as a harvesting activity carried out by members of the Métis community along Georgian Bay, be it as legally licensed or unlicensed fishermen, throughout the period. In particular, the Labatte, Langlade and Dusome families appear consistently in Census and fishery license records as fishermen along the south and east shores of Georgian Bay. As well, the names of the Couture, Granville, Jones, Desjardins, Lavallée are among those of successive generations of active Métis fishing families in Owen Sound (Bruce Peninsula) and Southampton (Lake Huron) throughout the same period.

4.4 Farming

The Crown in granting the original 20 acre land grants to the Métis and voyageurs from Drummond Island in 1828, no doubt hoped at least in part that the latter would clear and develop farms on this land. Although some Métis tried to live off the land as farmers, their success seems to have been limited. The factors behind this may be multiple, not the least being the poor quality of the soil of these lots. As we concluded in our previous work:

In summary, if the voyageurs turn to varied occupations, this would seem to indicate that farming does not allow them to maintain an adequate level of living or take on challenges that they consider sufficiently interesting.

A good number of voyageurs do nevertheless attempt to farm, but their tools, as well as the farming practices in use throughout the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century, remain rudimentary (ORN25). [...] the Census of the Canadas, in 1860-1861, lists some ten farmers with a voyageur background, which is very few considering their original numbers. The 1871 census allows us to compare their tools and agricultural output to that of the farmers in Lafontaine who own more equipment and buildings than the descendants of the voyageurs. For example, among the thirty-five descendants of voyageurs identified, fourteen own a total of nineteen barns and stables compared to fifteen of the eighteen habitant farmers who, collectively, own thirty-one farm buildings. As well, with the exception of a few bushels of fruit harvested by Charles Lafrenière and Antoine Labatte, and a certain amount of beets and corn, the crop yields [considered per acre] for the habitant farmers are quite superior to that of the voyageur descendants (Marchand, 1989: 41-42). (Our translation)

Original French:

[...] Enfin, si les voyageurs se tournent vers des occupations variées, cela semblerait indiquer que l'agriculture ne leur permet pas d'assurer un niveau de subsistance adéquat ou de relever des défis assez intéressants.

Bon nombre de voyageurs tentent néanmoins de devenir agriculteurs, mais leurs outils, tout comme les méthodes de culture pratiquées dans l'ensemble du pays au début du XIXe siècle, demeurent rudimentaires (25). [...] le recensement
des Canadas, en 1860-1861, indique la présence d'une dizaine de fermiers d'origine voyageur, ce qui est fort peu compte tenu des effectifs originaux. Le recensement de 1871 permet de comparer leurs outils et leur rendement agricole à celui des habitants de Lafontaine qui possèdent plus d'outillage et de bâtiments que les descendants des voyageurs. Par exemple, parmi trente-cinq descendants de voyageurs identifiés, quatorze possèdent un total de dix-neuf granges et étables par rapport à quinze sur les dix-huit habitants qui, ensemble, détiennent trente et un bâtiments de ce genre. Aussi, sauf certains produits, dont certains minots de fruits récoltés par Charles Lafrenière et Antoine Labatte, certaines betteraves et le maïs, le rendement des récoltes des habitants est nettement supérieur à celui des descendants des voyageurs.

The 1861 Agricultural Census of Tiny and Tay contains information about the farms of four Métis: John Brecett, Louis Labatt, James Leramme and David Corbier (Patterson, 1992). Together, the four have a total of 348 acres, of which 24.5 are under crops, 93 under pasture and the majority, 226 acres under wood or wild.

The 1871 Agricultural Census reveals a great difference between the output of the French-Canadian habitant farmers in the Lafontaine area and the Métis and voyageurs descendants. The total number of bushels of potato per acre is 88.5 for the former and 39 per acre for the latter. Crop yields for turnips, peas, oats and spring wheat are all superior for the habitant farmers. The latter also possess more cattle and sheep (Marchand, 1989: 85).

An analysis of the 1891 Census data shows that 29 people with Métis surnames gave “farmer” as their occupation (Census, 1891). The 1901 Census and the following one in 1911, show less than 10 people with Métis surnames indicating farmer as their occupation:

1901: Joseph Cadeau, Joseph Beausoleil, Antoine Labatte, Narcisse Boucher, Antiume Trudeau,
1911: Joseph Beausoleil, McKay Dusome, Baptiste Giroux, Richard Giroux (jr.) Francis Giroux (jr.), Xavier Legris.

These farmers have not farmed all of their lives. If one looks at the Labatte family genealogy, one can see it is the case, for example, of Antoine Labatte, a Métis who was born on Drummond Island on September 16, 1824. In 1856, Antoine Labatte was a fisherman in Thunder Bay, an occupation he still holds five years later, in 1861, in Tiny Township. In 1871, there is a shift in occupations. He gives three: farmer, cooper and wagon maker in Tiny Township. In 1891, Labatte still farms but has also returned to fishing. In his late seventies, Labatte, according to the 1901 Census, is a farmer in Tiny Township (Tessier, Descendants of Louis George Labatte, 2006). Some Métis, like Antoine Labatte were farmers at one point in their lives, but also worked at other occupations.

In conclusion, it would seem that the numbers of Métis who continued farming throughout the latter half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century were not considerable, indicating that a majority of the Métis and their descendants preferred other occupations. It would seem significant that the number of Métis farmers dropped after 1891, the period when both the lumber and the fishing boom were at their height.

4.5 Lumber industry

Sawmills developed in the Penetanguishene area mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued to be an important employer right up until the early 1930s. In 1851, a newspaper article published in the Barrie Magnet about Penetanguishene, alluded to the nascent lumber industry.
From the high price of lumber in the United States the attention of lumbermen has been directed to the region, and saw mills are beginning to spring up in different places on the lake shore. The lumber already shipped has not been remunerative. The pine on the shore is generally knotty, and the lumber manufactured of inferior quality, but further inland the pine may prove of a better sort (Barrie Magnet, 1851: 2).

This prediction proved to be correct. In North Simcoe County, the following decade saw massive growth in the lumber industry.

Beginning in 1854 a lumbering boom swept into north Simcoe County that was, in its devastation, second only to the rapine of the Ottawa Valley (ORN 138). In this readily accessible area of the northern lake forest, the most valued tree, the white pine, grew abundantly [...] (Fieguth, 1968: 24).

Both the provincial government and the economic context favoured this boom.

Several economic forces acting simultaneously in the early 1850s created strong markets for Canadian lumber and were, therefore, responsible for exploitation of the Georgian Bay pine forests [...]. The Reciprocity Treaty permitted most Canadian natural products and raw materials, including sawn lumber, to enter American markets free of duty (Angus, 1990: 35).

By the early 1860s, Tiny Township could boast 22 mills and in total, Simcoe County in 1861 produced 200 million board feet, a third of all the lumber cut in the province (Craig, 1977: 42). The industry became centered in the 1870s around the southern part of Georgian Bay, where the development of saw mills was aided in no small way by the arrival of the railway. Timber was rafted from the northern shores of Georgian Bay along the inner channel to the southern mills.

Penetanguishene, reviving with the arrival of a railroad in 1879, was already matched by the population of Midland which was founded in the 1870s. These two places, together with the nearby bayhead villages of Victoria Harbour and Waubaushene, became the new lumber foci for all Georgian Bay (Fieguth, 1968: 26).

The industry grew steadily and peaked in the 1890s as did the work force it employed, with large companies like the Christie Mill in Port Severn and the Georgian Bay Lumber Company Mill at Waubaushene working to capacity. “During the 1890s and through the first years of the new century Penetanguishene was at the centre of the lumbering boom, and the town prospered and was a hive of activity. By 1907 it had six sawmills [...]” (Craig, 1977: 45 and 50-51).

The four major mills were the Firstbrook Company, Beck's, McGibbon's and Gropp Bros. The McGibbon Lumber Company, established in 1855, employed about sixty millhands. The largest of the Penetanguishene mill operations, the Beck Company, went into production in 1878, and provided employment for almost 250 men. The Firstbrook Company commenced operations in 1867 and would grow to have a payroll which fluctuated between 250 and 300. Finally, the Gropp Brothers' Penetanguishene Lumber and Shingle Mills came into being in 1900 (Craig, 1977: 51-52).

Métis families from Penetanguishene also moved east and north along the coast of Georgian Bay to find work in lumber camps and sawmills. This mobility seems to have encompassed the
eastern shore of Georgian Bay as a whole. For instance, Métis descendant, Henry Labatte, born in Britt, started work at the age of thirteen for the Victoria Harbour Lumber Company, and after was employed as a lumberjack (Boyer, 1989: 109).

An analysis of the 1891 Census data for North Simcoe shows that seven people with Métis surnames, six of which are in Tay Township, gave lumber or sawmill labourer as their occupation (Census, 1891). The Praxis reports notes that ten years later: “The 1901 Census indicates that the primary occupation of métis men in the Penetanguishene vicinity at the time, particularly in Tay township, was working at a sawmill or in lumber camps” (Praxis, 2000: 85).

An examination was done of individuals in the 1911 Census in Tiny Township and Penetanguishene with the surnames identified as definite Métis families in the Praxis report. Of 72 individuals with these surnames, 34 indicated their place of work as a saw mill or the woods in the lumber trade.

In Penetanguishene, the time book of the Davidson Lumber Mill Company shows that it employed Métis workers. In January 1886, out of 25 names listed at least five have Métis connections. For the period 1890-1891, at least 5 names out of 28 are Métis. The period 1903-1906, reveals at least 35 names of Métis descendants on the payroll for these years (Davidson, PAO).

Census data and lumber company records thus indicate a strong presence of Métis descendants among the lumber and sawmill workers in Penetanguishene and the surrounding area during the peak years of this industry. This lumber boom would, in the following decades, come to an end. By the time of the 1929 Depression, the mills had either all nearly closed or burnt to the ground.

As noted previously, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as this industry grew it impacted negatively on the marine environment of Georgian Bay. This, in all likelihood, would have encouraged some Métis to turn from fishing to lumbering as a source of revenue.

4.6 Hunting, fishing and travelling guides

In the years following their move to Penetanguishene, the Métis are able to earn some money by working as guides in various capacities. Four of them are part of Charles Rankin’s surveying party in Nottawasaga Township between May and August 1833 (Marchildon, 1984: 58). Between 1822 and 1825, Hyppolite Brissette, Samuel Solomon and William Cowen are part of Captain Wosley Bayfield’s charting expeditions among the 30,000 islands of Georgian Bay (Marchand, 1989: 40).

Several of the narratives presented by A.C. Osborne refer to this type of occupation (Osborne, 1901: 132-139). Lewis Solomon talks of his various experiences as a paid guide involving not only himself but other Métis.

Once I conducted the Earl of Northumberland through the Indian trail from Colborne Bay (North-West Basin) to Thunder Bay and back in one day, and we got twenty five dollars for my services (Antoine Labatte says the distance by this trail was seven miles). I was the first man to pilot the steamer Duchess of Kalloola to the “Sault”. I got four dollars per day for this service. [...] I was guide for Captain West and David Mitchell (a young man from Montreal) to Manitoulin on snowshoes. I had three assistants-Aleck McKay, Pierre Laronde and Joseph Leramonda, half-breeds. I received one hundred dollars for the trip (Osborne, 1901: 132-133).

Solomon also describes guiding colonel W. H. Robinson to Manitoulin Island and Sault Ste. Marie (probably at the time of the treaties negociated in 1850), as well as bringing Captain
Strachan fishing and duck hunting on Lake St. Clair. Michel Labatte and Francis Giroux are also noted as serving as guides (Marchand, 1989: 40). Labatte, states:

I often went with the late Alfred Thompson, of Penetang., to the Blue Mountains hunting. I was with Captain Strachan at Baldoon, on Lake St. Clair, shooting ducks (Osborne, 1901: 139).

As noted in the Praxis report, Elmes Henderson’s 1856 account contains his:

[...] recollection of this group’s occupational niche as “guides, trappers, boatmen and canoe-men” [and] is consistent with Jury and Jury’s (1959:44) account of the “French Canadians” at Penetanguishene whose “heritage of life in the wilderness and along the lakes and rivers of the north and west” made them “invaluable as guides for the officers and visitors at the post” (cf. Barry 1968: 41-42; Marchand 1989: 40, in Praxis, 2000: 92).

Métis descendants were to continue working at this occupation into the 1900s as the influx of tourists and cottagers along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay grew. The 1901 census gives an indication of Métis men taking up this profession. “In Tiny, a greater range of occupations was engaged in by métis men, the most striking being that of “Tourist Guide” which ten métis men listed as their primary occupation” (Praxis, 2000: 112). In the 1920s at the fishing lodge of Camp Rawley in Port Severn there were usually three guides employed and these included people with Métis surnames: Frank Geroux, Simon Bonneville, Jerry Cascagnette and Paul Bressette (Rawson, 1976: 40).

The manuscript notebook of Neil MacNaughtan, the game and fishery overseer in the Parry Sound District from 1920 to around 1946, lists individuals who were issued guide licenses between 1921 and 1925. A number of these have Métis surnames: Degardin (Desjardins), Dusome, Labatt, Lacroix, Lafrenia (Lafrenière) Langlade, Lamondie, Lamonday, Massier, Michaud, Perrault, Prisque, Secord, Trudeau, Brunelle, Contois, LeBlanc, Leprieur, Light, Longlade, Roque, Robillard, Robitaille, Secord, Solomon, Valley (MacNaughtan fonds, PAO, F4330-3-0-1).

Ruth McCuaig, local historian for the Pointe au Baril area, notes that in the period stretching from the 1920s to early 1940s:

As guides, the Shawanaga people were at a disadvantage when the French Canadians came from Penetang. The latter could afford to own launches to transport tourists — something quite out of reach for most Indians.

As more and more summer tourists acquired their own islands and faster boats, and good charts became available, the need for guides rapidly disappeared (McCuaig, 1989: 33).

Although the author doesn’t name any of these “French Canadians from Penetang”, it seems likely that all or some of these guides with launches would have been Métis with French-Canadian names.

In her book on the relationship between the landscape of Georgian Bay and its people, author Claire Elizabeth Campbell quotes a 1936 visitor’s comment about these Métis guides: “The Indians and the half-Indian guides, with their primitive outlook, add to the sense of difference” (Campbell, 2005: 102.) Campbell explains that there was a dependency relationship between the locals and the newcomers, similar to the one that existed when the first White people came to the area.
In fact, non-Natives were as dependent on the local Native, mixed-blood, and French-speaking population as they had always been. Local residents guided campers and sportsmen, and performed all manner of construction and maintenance work for cottagers: laying fireplaces, and docks, cutting wood and ice, and running marinas (Campbell, 2005: 103).

Interestingly, Campbell notes how these locals are described by the newcomers in local histories, published accounts or journals.

Guides tagged with a single name — Pete, Dave, or Michel, for example — dispense laconic observations about the landscape in broken English. The local French-speaking population was seen in a similar light, as a historical fragment with a hint of the voyageur about them. (The francophone community at Penetanguishene descends in large part from families that accompanied the British garrison when it relocated from Drummond Island to Penetang in 1828. Families up the shore still bear names such as Trudeau, Robitaille, Le Page, Roi/King, and Dion (Campbell, 2005: 104).

A local Midland author alludes to the close relationship of present day residents of Port Severn with the land and water:

The descendants of the original mill hands who James Sanson recruited from Quebec are still there. These are people with names like Legault, Geroux, Cadeau, Bressette, Bonneville, Gendron; the list goes on. They make their living with the tourist trade or in the nearby towns, happy to be living close to the land and the water. That is, close enough to catch a few crappies to fry for supper (Haskill, 2002: 37).

It should be noted, however, that in the above quote the author has confused the two groups with French names (the descendants of those originally from Québec and those of the Métis from the Upper Great Lakes).

In summary, throughout the 1800s and 1900s a number of Métis on the shores of Georgian Bay have used their knowledge and interest in the land and water to work as fishing, hunting and tourist guides.

4.7 Other occupations

Aside from the occupation categories in the previous sections, it is clear that the Métis also chose or were obliged to work at other occupations. The Naval and Military Establishments provided some employment on a limited contract basis for a number of people. An analysis of the Definition of the original personnel at the Naval and Military Establishments, Penetanguishene 1817-1856 shows that 25 men with Métis surnames were on the pay roll of the Establishments working at a dozen of various occupations, in particular as: interpreter, volunteer militia, blacksmith, roofer, baker, canoe man, guide, fisherman, pilot, and clerk (Patterson, 1987) (See Appendix 6).

There is also evidence that at least a few of the Métis growing crops supplied the Naval and Military Establishments. A receipt dated July 6, 1835 was issued to François Dusome for the purchase of 52 bundles of hay for 1 pound 6 shillings by the Establishments. A contract dated
October 24, 1840, was signed by Charles Vasseur and Fulford B. Feilde to supply forage at the price of 1 shilling and 3 pence for every ration of forage (Penetanguishene, PAO).

The Praxis report noted that: “In addition to the data collected about the fur trade in the Penetanguishene vicinity, there is evidence also of other resources being harvested in the area” (Praxis, 2000: 81). However, apart from the fishery, the report gives no details of these other harvesting activities.

The government employed some Métis in various capacities. Michel Labatte describes several of his work experiences in his narrative to A. C. Osborne.

I was sent by the Government to clear the land where Waubaushene now stands, for the Indians. I planted potatoes and sowed grain. I was there when the Government built the first grist-mill and houses for the Indians in Coldwater (Osborne, 1901: 140).

He also talks of other employment:

I was in the Shawanaga country for furs on two occasions when I could not get out, on account of floods. I was four days without food, which was cached at the mouth of the river. At another time I was five days without food, except moss off the rocks on account of floods and soft weather. [...] I was fireman for three summers on the steamer Gore, commanded by Captain Fraser, who married a daughter of Hippolyte Brissette. I went with the volunteers to Chippawa and Navy Island to clear out the Mackenzie rebels (Osborne, 1901: 140).

Beginning in 1854, the Canadian government employed First Nations people to carry the mail from Penetanguishene to Sault Ste. Marie (Bayliss, 1938: 151). Michel Labatte was one of these carriers according to his own account.

I carried the mail to the “Sault” in winter on snow-shoes. I made the trip from Penetanguishene to the “Sault” and back (three hundred miles) with a sleigh and two dogs in fifteen days-snow three feet deep. I once made the trip in fourteen days. Dig a hole in the snow with my snow-shoes, spread spruce boughs, eat piece of cold pork, smoke pipe and go to sleep. I often had Mal de racquette. I would sharpen my flint, then split the flesh of the ankle above the instep in several places, and sometimes down the calf of the leg for a remedy (Osborne, 1901: 139-140).

Not surprisingly, this occupation was described as being for the hardy. The sleds would contain around 180 pounds and the mail was often late (Gutsche, 2002: 101). It seems possible that other Métis either from Penetanguishene or further along the shore of Georgian Bay participated in this activity.

The mail courier for Bruce Mines, Mr. Miron, snowshoed to Killarney to meet the Penetanguishene courier. He claimed he wore out one pair of snowshoes on the way there and another on the way back. Depending on the weather, he could cover between 35 and 60 miles a day. (He later confessed that he would often try to leave before the Penetang courier’s arrival so that he could return home without the burden of the mail on his back!) After
meeting up with Miron, the Penetanguishene courier would then complete his bone-chilling trek by crossing over to Manitoulin. On the island, mail was distributed by whatever means possible. Boys could earn extra pocket money by couriering mail, but it was not easy (Gutsche, 2002: 103).

The names of Larry Patreau, Gig Kanosh, and the Bussineaus are also mentioned as mailmen at this time on the route between the Sault and Penetanguishene (Bayliss, 1938: 166).

In its listing for Penetanguishene, the Ontario Directory for 1851 mentions three likely Métis business people: Andrew Dusome (boot and shoemaker), Louis Columbus (blacksmith), and James Farling (blacksmith) (Ontario Directory for 1851: 113).

In the 1860-1861 Population Census for the Townships of Tiny and Tay Including the Agricultural Returns and the Reformatory, there are 29 names of Métis that are listed as labourers (Patterson, 1992). Métis descendants, Catherine Labatte, born on Drummond Island, is one of four seamstresses in Penetanguishene, Catharine Craddock (19 years old) and Louisa Solomon (20 years old), list their occupation as domestic servants, while another, Mary Corbière is a mid-wife (Marchand, 1989: 42).

The 1872 Gazetteer lists the following Métis: Hypolite Brecette, carpenter, Peter Cadeau, laborer, Joseph Dusome, clerk, and Antoine Lafreniere, wheelwright (Gazetteer 1872-3: 129-130). The Assessment Roll For the Municipality of Penetanguishene of 1876 contains the names of at least 17 Métis descendants, with the most, nine, being listed as labourers, one carpenter, one hotel keeper, one brickmaker, one wheelmaker, and one farmer. An analysis of the 1891 Census data, shows that 44 people with Métis surnames gave labourer or general labourer as their occupation (Census, 1891).

In 1893, J. C. Hamilton gives this flattering description of the Métis of Manitoulin Island:

It is from the residents along these shores, of pure and mixed blood, that many of the hardy voyageurs, raftsmen and axemen in lumber camps, or engaged in moving the great tows of logs, covering many acres in extent, are gathered. They are a jovial and hardy race. They are among the bravest hunters and fishermen. The old French blood mingles in the veins of not a few of those occupying these northerly settlements. Many of the families have become known for their sterling character and independent circumstances. They have interests in valuable mines, some of which were discovered or developed by their heads, or are well to do traders with extensive business ramifications throughout the wilder country to the north and west. Their young people are educated at the schools at Wikwemikong and elsewhere in the district, and at the Shingwauk and Wawonosh Homes near Ste. Marie, and there are Metes (sic) ladies who have taken courses of music and French in Toronto, Montreal or Paris. Among such families the names of Sawyer, Corbeau, Biron and D'Lamorondiere (sic) are prominent (Hamilton, 1893: 70-71).

The Praxis report identified several métis tradesmen (eg., cooper, carpenter, harbour master) in the 1901 census (Praxis, 2000: 112).

In summary, Métis occupations evolved over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as did the regional economy. Nevertheless, it is clear that a number of Métis continued to carry on traditional harvesting occupations.
5. Regarding the definition of the two concepts, “ethnogenesis” and “effective control”

We have sought to examine the definition of the two concepts, “ethnogenesis” and “effective control” as previously established in cases involving Métis in Ontario and elsewhere in order to get a better grasp of these notions as they relate to the Penetanguishene Métis community. We examined legal summaries and court decisions and, in particular, the Powley case that was decided in the Supreme Court of Canada in September 2003. With regard to this important decision the Supreme Court of Canada stated that:

A Métis community can be defined as a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographic area and sharing a common way of life (Teillet, 2004: 8).

As well, the court established a new test for determining harvesting rights. This new test is set out in ten parts. Parts 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7, presented below, are those that are particularly relevant to the focus of our research (certain passages are underlined for emphasis).

The Powley test

1. Characterization of the right – for a harvesting right, the term “characterization” refers to the ultimate use of the harvest. Is it for food, exchange or commercial purposes? The Court said that the Métis right to hunt is not limited to moose just because that is what the Powleys were hunting. Métis don’t have to separately prove a right to hunt every species of wildlife or fish they depend on. The right to hunt is not species-specific. It is a general right to hunt for food in the traditional hunting grounds of the Métis community.

“... the test for Métis practices should focus on identifying those practices, customs and traditions that are integral to the Métis community's distinctive existence and relationship to the land.”

[...]

3. Identification of the historic rights bearing community - An historic Métis community was a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, who lived together in the same geographic area and shared a common way of life. The historic Métis community must be shown to have existed as an identifiable Métis community prior to the time when Europeans effectively established political and legal control in a particular area.

4. Identification of the contemporary rights bearing community - Métis community identification requires two things. First, the community must self-identify as a Métis community. Second, there must be proof that the contemporary Métis community is a continuation of the historic Métis community.

5. Identification of the relevant time – In order to identify whether a practice was “integral” to the historic Aboriginal community, the Court looks for a relevant time. Ideally, this is a time when the practice can be identified and before it is forever changed by European influence. For Indians, the Court looks to a “pre-contact” time. The Court modified this test for Métis in recognition of the fact that Métis arose as an Aboriginal people after contact with Europeans. The Court called the appropriate time test for Métis the “post contact but pre-control” test and said that the focus should
be on the period after a particular Métis community arose and before it came under the effective control and influence of European laws and customs.

[...]

7. **Continuity between the historic practice and the contemporary right** - There must be some evidence to support the claim that the contemporary practice is in continuity with the historic practice. Aboriginal practices can evolve and develop over time. The Court found that the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community had shown sufficient evidence to prove that hunting for food continues to be an integral practice (Teillet, 2004: 26-27).

Another ruling, in the case of R. v. Willison in the British Columbia Provincial court, in March 2005, gives this example of effective control:

Dr. Angel fixed the date of effective European “control” (being the date by which European settlers exerted governmental-like control over the territory) by reference to the creation of the Dominion, the appointment of a customs commissioner, the appointment of Chief Justice Begbie, and the beginning of the gold rush in 1858. Considering those and other factors he suggested the date of control was somewhere between 1859 and 1864. Mr. Oliphant for the Crown suggested effective control was established between 1858 and 1862 (R. v. Willison, 2005: para. 121).

In this case, the three events that led to effective control are: the appointment of a customs officer and a judge (by the government) and an economic development, the gold rush. Although the Supreme Court of British Columbia later ruled in favour of the Crown in the appeal of this case in June 2006, it maintained the period of effective control as being correct.

In the Laviolette case in Saskatchewan (2005) two interesting points emerged. The first being that the date of effective control in this case was found to be 1912 when the government established townships and a new land system in the part of northern Saskatchewan, Green Lake, under consideration in this trial. The second was the existence of a “regional historic rights bearing Métis community” identified as Northwest Saksatchewan. In this instance, the geographic area was “defined as a triangle of fixed communities on Green Lake, Ile à la Crosse and Lac la Biche and includes all of the settlements within and around the triangle, including Meadow Lake” (Teillet, 2006: 39). It was shown that the Métis within this triangle were highly mobile and that they moved often and traveled far for food, trapping and work. This case was not appealed. The latter finding may have a particular significance with regard to establishing the existence of a larger, Georgian Bay-Lake Huron Métis community. In the Laviolette case it was shown that:

Constant movement between the fixed settlements allowed the Métis to develop and maintain significant trade and kinship connections in the region and within the larger network of Métis people (the Métis Nation) (Teillet, 2006: 39).

Such ties of kinship and mobility patterns certainly existed in the case of the Georgian Bay Métis as they moved between Penetanguishene, the North shore and the Sault Ste. Marie area, and in particular along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. As well, Métis established in the Southampton and Owen Sound areas maintained ties with the Georgian Bay Métis community.
5.1 The period of “effective control” as it applies in the case of the Penetanguishene area Métis community

In the Powley case, the period of effective control was found to encompass a span of 40 years. The trial judge found, and the parties agreed in their pleadings before the lower courts, that “effective control [of the Upper Great Lakes area] passed from the Aboriginal peoples of the area (Ojibway and Métis) to European control” in the period between 1815 and 1850 (Supreme Court of Canada, 2003: para. 90).

This period was determined by considering the following factors as noted in the court transcript:

[...]

Because of the common origin of the two communities (Penetanguishene and Sault Ste. Marie) as part of the Upper Great Lakes Métis, this period applies to some extent to the Penetanguishene Métis as well. However, in the case of the latter there are other factors to consider that are specific to them.

It is interesting to note that the Praxis report, although it conducted a review and study of nearly all aspects of the Métis community in the Penetanguishene area, did not touch on the question of effective control, with the exception of attempting to demonstrate that the Métis were not included, and did not ask to be included, in treaty negotiations with First Nation people. However, as we’ve noted, there was at least one case, in 1840, where the Penetanguishene Métis attempted to negotiate for a recognition of their status by presenting a petition to the Governor General to receive presents.

In our view, there are five possible dates and events to be considered in determining the period of effective control that best applies to the Penetanguishene Métis.

A. Treaties, negotiations and relations with First Nations

This factor, the negotiations and treaties signed between the government and the First Nation peoples of the area was considered in the Powley case. In the Praxis report, these negotiations and treaties are reviewed at some length with the authors concluding that no Métis participated in negotiations of land surrenders or treaties with First Nation people (Praxis, 2000: 63). Nevertheless, the report does recognize that: “It is virtually certain that some of the band members involved in the surrenders negotiated between 1785 and 1836 were biologically of mixed European and Indian descent” (Praxis, 2000: 66).
Later, on pages 121 to 126, the report mentions that some Métis in the Parry Sound area who are related to the original Penetanguishene Métis community receive Treaty annuities though they are considered distinct by both the First Nation people and the government. The fact of being excluded or not considered in these treaties points to the recognition of the distinct status of the Métis, who are neither First Nation nor White.

Darren R. Préfontaine considers the 1840 petition of the Penetanguishene Métis from the following angle:

Métis activism was evident before and after the signing of the Robinson Superior and Huron Treaties in 1850. In 1840, the Métis of Penetanguishene, originally from Sault Ste. Marie and Drummound [sic] Island, petitioned the Governor General indicating their desire to be included in the annual payments to the local Indians. These annuities were initially given to ensure First Nations loyalty to the Crown, but developed into humanitarian aid after the Indians became sedentary. The Métis in this region did not receive such charity. The Métis petitioners stressed their loyalty to the Crown - many were members of the militia - their indigence and desire to receive assistance to which they were entitled as First Nations peoples. In essence, they were fighting for their First Nations rights. After pleading their case, these Métis were granted the annuities, however, government officials doubted the wisdom of such a policy because they believed it would encourage race mixing between French Canadians and Indians (Préfontaine, 2003: 17-18).

In the 1870s, there is at least one instance where some of the First Nation Christian Island band members came to view the Métis as not only different, but also as a problem that should be removed from the Reserve. David J. Assance, “interpreter and writer of the band” wrote a letter sent to the Indian Affairs office on February 21, 1873, and signed by six band members, including Chief John Aissance.

At the request of the Indians or Chippewas I forward to you this declaration about the few halfbreed (sic) belong (sic) to the french race. There are 7 seven families these are making sometimes a great disturbance into this Band. The said half breeds in secretly (sic) making counsel to expell the Chippeway Chief of this Band and to have the (sic) half breed be a chief of this band we are the Indians of Chippeway tribe of the said band. Have the same chief of one family from generation to generation of the said family (namely) chief John Assance to which our forefathers have sanctionned. And by our kindness and humility we came to consider these said half breeds to give them help for their children to live we humbly pray to our govner (sic) general and ask to give us the certified (?) reply of the said half breeds which are in hands of the Chippeway of the said individuals. We still hold our chief we find no blameless (sic) to expell him who has been our protector of forty years we also agree untill he die (sic) (Assance, PAC, 1873).

On June 3, 1873, Superintendent W.R. Bartlett responded from Toronto to this letter by indicating to the Deputy Supt. of Indian Affairs in Ottawa that:
[...] in regard to the Half Breeds to which the chief alludes, that they are a portion of that community and were members of the Band when they lived at Coldwater and Beausoleil Island.

They are of course entitled to participate in the interest and annuity of those Indians and have drawn their portion during my superintendence and long before.

The chief John Assance is a very ignorant man and the Half Breeds in their councils threaten to dismiss him.

I have told them they could not dismiss him but if he should commit any grave offence on its being reported to the Government the matter would be inquired into (Bartlett, PAC, 1873).

Of particular interest in the response by Bartlett is that, according to him, the seven Métis families were already part of the Chippewa band when it was at Coldwater and Beausoleil Island. The band moved from Coldwater in the late 1830s, after the reserve was ceded and divided between 1836 and 1838 (Hunter, 1909: 19). The band moved first to Beausoleil Island, and then later to Christian Island, where, by 1846 it included 232 members and had built fourteen houses (Angus, 1998: 48).

**B. The incorporation of a local municipal government with jurisdiction over the Métis and other landowners**

In the north part of Simcoe County, the township of Tiny and the village of Penetanguishene in the first part of the nineteenth century came under one municipal government. The first municipal government was created in 1842, with Tiny and Tay townships grouped together. At that time, all of Simcoe County was part of the Home District. The following year it separated from this district and, from then on, Council meetings were held in Barrie instead of Toronto. In 1849, Upper Canada transferred the responsibility of property assessment to the municipalities.

In 1849, Upper Canada (now Ontario) enacted the first comprehensive legislation that repealed dozens of statutes related to various local government functions in favour of a single, consolidated Municipal Act. Known as the Baldwin Act, this statute not only established villages, towns and cities, but also the legislative parameters within which they could operate (City of Ottawa, 2005).

Later, in 1851, a United Township of Tiny and Tay was created. In 1869, Tiny Township became a separate township. It was not until 1875 that Penetanguishene became incorporated as a separate village, and then in 1882 as a town.

As a result of being included on the first assessment rolls, the Métis would have had to start paying property tax, no doubt a financial burden. As early as 1830, the Métis were complaining that the £ 8 they were being asked to pay to register the title to their original lots was unfair and beyond their means.

However, no records of the assessment rolls prior to the 1850s seem to exist for Tiny Township either at the Township office, the Simcoe County Archives or the Ontario Provincial Archives. Therefore, it is impossible to determine how much property tax was levelled on lots owned by the Métis and if this tax was paid.
The incorporation of municipalities in the areas occupied by the Métis and the ceding of all of the land on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay with the signing of the Robinson Treaties in 1850 together constitute measures taken by the Crown that impacted on the Métis way of life. The obligation to secure title in order to remain on a piece of land, in other words the end of permanent squatting, forced the Métis to modify their lifestyle.

As Pat McArthur states in regard to the Métis in general, and those of the Saugeen Southampton area in particular:

> From their aboriginal ancestors, for example, was practiced the custom of migrating at particular seasons to engage in sustenance activities. Thus they can be seen to keep more than one residence, contrary to other newcomers who “settled” down in one location (McArthur, 2005: 60).

The Métis of the Southampton area, she adds, were soon to find themselves at risk of losing their land.

> Upon completion of the 1851 survey [of Southampton] the Metis Granvilles, Beausoleils, and Longes, found themselves on the new “Front Street” much sought-after lakefront property. Immediately, they were labeled “squatters” by the Crown, a derogatory term given to Metis in similar situations about the Great Lakes. In their ensuing fight for patents on their long-held property, they found themselves hindered in their fight by language, culture, and an increasingly negative attitude towards the Metis as a people (McArthur, 2005: 76).

The changes effected by the Crown and the municipal governments in the period from 1845 to 1850 forced the Métis to adjust their way of life and formally acquire land to live on it.

C. The beginning of the lumber industry in the area (1860s)

The lumber industry in and around Penetanguishene experienced a considerable boom as of the 1860s and soon became the area’s main industry. This was both allowed and encouraged by the Crown through the sale or lease of timber rights along the northern and eastern shores of Georgian Bay. As well, the Ontario government contributed to the establishment of the North Simcoe Railway Co. which allowed for the extension of a railway line that reached Penetanguishene in 1879. This greatly favoured the export of wood and wood products out of the area. Seven sawmills sprang up around Penetanguishene Bay and several other large operations opened up around Matchedash Bay. The Ontario government equally passed legislation in 1890 that made it compulsory for companies to mill timber in the province before exporting it to the United States.

The participation of Métis men in this sector of the economy marks a shift in their lifestyle. The decline in the fur trade, and later the decline in the fishery resulting from over-fishing and environmental problems no doubt encouraged Métis to seek employment in the lumber mills and elsewhere.

Slowly at first, but then at an accelerated pace, the lumber industry replaced the fur trade and the weak agricultural sector as the area’s main industry. With the arrival of the railway, Simcoe County as a whole came to have 45 sawmills (Marchand, 1989: 74).

John Craig notes that the lumbering companies in Penetanguishene, the Firstbrook Company, Beck's, McGibbon's and Gropp Bros. owed their success to the availability of the raw material, the forests.
All of these firms owned or leased the timber rights on huge tracts of forest along the eastern and northern shores of Georgian Bay, the North Channel, and west to Michipicoten and beyond on Lake Superior (Craig, 1977: 52).

The following description, written about the Muskoka area, applies as well to the Georgian Bay region.

The Province would grant timber licenses to lumbermen [...] The Province collected timber dues on all pine timber taken down in the area [...] This was so profitable for the government that it was said that the dues collected paid all the administration costs for the Province. The railway provided transportation for industry, lumber and shingle mills opened up [...]. Eventually the lumbermen cut down all the trees and put themselves out of business (Visit Muskoka).

The Crown’s involvement in the timber industry increased considerably in the 1800s. The government in Ontario was at the forefront of this movement.

As the timber trade expanded, Upper and Lower Canada began to recognize it as a potential source of revenue. In 1826, regulations provided for the payment of timber dues on wood cut on Crown lands, specified minimum diameters of trees for cutting and permitted anyone to harvest Crown wood upon payment of a fixed scale of rates. [...] By the mid-1800s, the lumber trade was a booming and profitable business, and competition to enter it was fierce. To bring a degree of organization to the development of Crown forests, the government of the United Provinces passed regulations in 1846 for the granting of licenses. This action spread quickly to the individual provinces. New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec were among the first provinces to pass legislation granting tenure and licenses and introducing stumpage and ground rents (e.g., Ontario’s first Crown Timber Act in 1849), whereas the remaining provinces and two territories waited until the latter part of the 19th Century (e.g., the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 for the prairies and the territories under federal jurisdiction, and the 1888 Land Act in British Columbia) (Natural Resources Canada, 1997, Chapter II: 25-26).

Local historian James Angus explains that large tracts of Crown lands in the Parry Sound and Muskoka districts became available in 1866.

The pine lands in Muskoka and Parry Sound districts would be set aside as “free grant” land for immigrants, but, first, timber rights to this huge block of land—ninety miles long and seventy-five miles wide—lying between the French and Severn rivers would be sold to lumbermen at public auction. The Crown Lands Department estimated that this area contained about one-eighth of all the standing pine timber remaining in eastern Canada (Angus, 1990: 24).

Selling timber rights proved lucrative for the government. As Angus notes:
To build up revenue in anticipation of the enormous expenditure of public funds for roads and public buildings in the new settlements, the Ontario government substantially increased timber dues (the principal source of provincial revenue) and put new timber regulations into effect. [...] Lumbermen paid for the privilege of cutting timber in three ways: by a charge for the timber licence, by annual ground rent, and by dues on the timber and lumber actually cut. After 1866, timber licenses were sold at public auction with an upset price, or reserve bid, determined by the commissioner of crown lands prior to a sale, timber berths were laid out and surveyed by government timber cruisers, who determined the quantity of timber in each berth (Angus, 1990: 48).

In summary, because working in the lumber camps and lumber mills became the prime economic activity in the territory occupied by the Métis, and since this activity impacted on resource harvesting in this area, it was natural that they should either choose to take up jobs in this sector or another, or leave the area altogether.

D. The period when the Métis / voyageurs start to leave the immediate Penetanguishene area

The period of the lumber boom corresponds to this period. Beginning in the late 1840s a significant number of Métis families begin to move either into other areas along the shore of Georgian Bay or elsewhere in or out of Simcoe County altogether. As the Praxis report noted:

[...] as the timber industry developed in the Georgian Bay regions, there occurred a gradual movement of voyageur families from Penetanguishene north along the coast of Georgian Bay toward Parry Sound and beyond as métis men found work in lumber camps and sawmills in the Muskoka and Parry Sound districts (Praxis, 2000: 120).

This movement seems to be attributable to, among others, the following factors:

i) the Métis are unable to continue their traditional lifestyle in the Penetanguishene area,
ii) the Métis are unable to make a living by farming on the lots they received from the Crown in 1828,
iii) the Métis are seeking employment in the lumber industry,
iv) or the Métis simply choose to move elsewhere.

E. The arrival of other settlers in the area (Tiny Township in particular) in the 1840s and 1850s

The Crown encouraged settlement in North Simcoe through the surveying and granting of lots. It is to be noted that the French-Canadian settlers that took up lots in Tiny Township between 1841 and 1854 seemed to have received better lands than those granted to the Métis in 1828. Besides being less suitable for agricultural purposes, the 20 acre lots granted to the Métis were smaller that the usual 200 acre lots being given to settlers at that time (Marchand, 1989: 37).

An increased population in Tiny Township, which included Penetanguishene, brought about the creation of a municipal government in the 1840s. As Fieguth points out with regard to First Nation people in the Southern Georgian Bay area:
In-coming settlers pressured the government to remove even the successful Indians from the choice lots, and by 1838 they had left, mainly for island reserves (ORN 99: Fieguth, 1968:19).

Further north, along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, settlement was also encouraged by the Crown.

[...] the government of the newly established Canada set up an Act in 1868 that would give 100 to 200 acres of land in the areas around eastern Georgian Bay to settlers who would consent to spend five full years on that (unbeknownst to them) unforgiving soil and eke out an existence. The Free Grants and Homestead Act was responsible for much of the development in Georgian Bay Country. Most of the townships surrounding Parry Sound were established as a direct result. [...] to supplement their incomes, many of these farmers worked in the logging camps or the mills, or ran trap lines for fur, and left their families to tend the small farms on their own (North Star Publishing).

Conclusion:

Effective control cannot be pinned down to one single factor and is the result of a combination of measures and events occurring no earlier than 1845 and no later than the 1860s. The two main factors are:

1. The obligation of Métis to become landowners, a measure brought about by the end of First Nation title and squatting along Georgian Bay as well as the arrival of other settlers on the surrounding lands;

2. The Crown selling timber rights to companies and thus fostering an extensive lumber industry. This industry had an effect on traditional harvesting, notably of fish on Georgian Bay. Also the Crown imposed an obligation to take out fishing licenses as early as 1857. As we’ve seen in the historical records, in Georgian Bay the Métis continued to harvest without licenses and were mentioned on several occasions as illegal fishers.
Appendix 1

List of original grantees of Penetanguishene Park Lots according to Surveyor General Office Map of June 8, 1830

Source: PAC. RG 5, Civil Secretary’s Correspondence. Upper Canada Sundries/A1, Vol. 100, no. 2/C-6870.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Lot No.</th>
<th>Original grantee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st row</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Etienne Frechette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>François Topied ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pierre Girout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Diné Lavalle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Joseph Roi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>J. Rawson senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd row</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>William Simpson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste Trudeau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>André Vasseur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>François Rochleau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>George Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pierre Tibeau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Pierre Roland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Charles Vaseur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Antoine Lafrenier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>François Languedoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Louis Lacerte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Andrew Cadieux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Joseph Desjardin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd row</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jean Giner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Louis Epion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cyril Pomberd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jacques Ardour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Joseph Desjardin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pierre Bled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ebenizer Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Louis Bled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Joseph Carron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Joseph Carron Jr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste Lagarde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Joseph Recollet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th row</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Pierre Lepine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Charles Langed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Joacim Lagasè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Charles Spendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Amable Lamerge ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Joseph Le Gris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Charles Langed Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>James Palmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Antoine Boudria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>François Secord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Pierre Gronette ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Tom Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2

**Information on Penetanguishene land grantees with Métis connections**

*source: Ontario Land Records Index ca. 1780-ca.1920*

Note: PEN = Penetanguishene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of locatee</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Lot/Conc.</th>
<th>Date ID</th>
<th>Issue date</th>
<th>Transaction Type</th>
<th>Type of Free Grant</th>
<th>Archival ref. RG-1, Series C-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FARLING James</td>
<td>Tay</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>WPT 14, conc. 5</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>Oct. 13, 1830</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. 132, p. 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEURY Henry</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>S1/2 18 &amp; 19, conc. 15</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Dec. 26, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. 125, p. 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEURY Henry</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>S1/2 18 &amp; 19, conc. 15</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>April 11, 1836</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. C-14, vol. 6, p. 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRECHETTE Etienne</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 17</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>August 28, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 124, p. 48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GORDON George</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>31st Range</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GORDON George</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Jan. 7, 1836</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GORDON George</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>107 &amp; 109 conc. 2 WPR</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1829</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. 124, p. 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEROUX Pierre Jr.</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3 conc. 2</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 21, 1839</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 124, p. 105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABATTE Louis G.</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>S ½ 16 Cons. 17</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>March 19, 1836</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. 124, p. 131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABATTE Louis George</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>S ½ 16 conc. 17</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>March 21, 1836</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/ Militia Service</td>
<td>Vol. 124, p. 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABATTE Lewis G.</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>5, conc. 1</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>April 29, 1835</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGARDE Eustache</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>10, 2nd Range</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>May 26, 1836</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGLADE Charles</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>July 27, 1897</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Old Regulations</td>
<td>Vol. 13, p. 170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGLADE Charles Jr.</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>St Joseph Island</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>July 27, 1979</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Old Regulations</td>
<td>Vol. 15, p. 540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGLADE Charles Sr.</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>Pk 35, West Bay</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGLADEN Charles Jr.</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>Pk lot 33</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>March 5, 1835</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAVALLE Denis</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>Pk lot 5</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>April 10, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUEDOC Francis</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk 19</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Aug. 5, 1846</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 35, p. 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEPIERRE Pierre</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>Pk 36 West Bay</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCHELL Andrew</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>17 &amp; 25, 1st Range</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCHELL Andrew</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 25, 1835</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>Vol. 34, p. 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCHELL Andrew</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>105, conc. 2</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Oct. 11,</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/</td>
<td>Vol. 124,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Grant Type</td>
<td>Military Service</td>
<td>Vol.</td>
<td>p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCHELL David</td>
<td>Tay</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>BR20, conc.3</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Oct. 11, 1831</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCHELL David</td>
<td>Medonte</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>E ½ 18 SW ¼ 1, Conc. 10</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Oct. 11, 1831</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAYETTE Louis</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>9, 1st Range</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POMBIRD Cyril</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 12</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>March 5, 1835</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOLLE Joseph</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 39</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>June 30, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOLLE Joseph</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 39</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>June 30, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMING Joseph</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 6</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>June 30, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Full Fees</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEUR Charles</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>N ½ 84 Conc. 1</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>C 1837 (or 1832)</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Heir &amp; Devisee Commissions</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEUR Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>N ½ 79 W Pen Rd</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>Aug. 29, 1831</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEUR Joseph</td>
<td>Flos</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>W (?) ½ 80 W Pen Rd</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>Jan. 22, 1833</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEUR Lori</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>N ½ 18 conc. 15</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>Dec. 12, 1839</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLOMON William</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>105, conc. 1 ES</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLOMON Henry</td>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>S ½ 79 W Pen Rd</td>
<td>Location ticket</td>
<td>March 22, 1831</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECORD Francis</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Pk lot 41</td>
<td>Order-In-Council</td>
<td>June 30, 1834</td>
<td>Free Grant</td>
<td>Military/Militia Service</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3

#### 1834 list of Penetanguishene land owners granted title to their lots


Executive Council Chamber at Toronto Monday 30\(^{th}\) June 1834

Read the following schedule of persons who have performed the settlement duties on this location on this Town and Park Lots at Penetanguishene and entitled to their patent deeds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town lot</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Park lot</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Plante Junior</td>
<td>12 in 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Half and acre</td>
<td>yeoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Mitchell</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>esquire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfroi Boyer</td>
<td>16 in 2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td>Half and acre</td>
<td>yeoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre Vasseur</td>
<td>22 &quot; 1st</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>esquire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisque Legris</td>
<td>11 &quot; 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedin Revolt</td>
<td>18 &quot; 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustin Pricour</td>
<td>19 &quot; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do --- do</td>
<td>21 &quot; 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine Lafrenier</td>
<td>18 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Lasert</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Rollande</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Blette</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alias Sorrel</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Blette</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Caron senior</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Caron jr</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joachim LaGassé (Lagacé)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisque Legris</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Baptiste LaRonde</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Plante</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Récolle</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alias Numenville</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine Boudsin (Boudria)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>François Secord</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Vasseur</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended that the Patents do issue
## Appendix 4

**Residents of Penetanguishene for 1832**

as listed in *The City of Toronto and the Home District commercial directory and register...for 1837*

*Source: Walton, 1843: 178-179*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twenty acre lots</th>
<th>Town lots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Boyer</td>
<td>Antoine Brodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Boyer</td>
<td>J. B. Bouchier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Bowden</td>
<td>L. Chevritte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bannister</td>
<td>James Farling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Brunie</td>
<td>Joseph Freismith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Cowan</td>
<td>Pierre Gerro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Crawford</td>
<td>Denis Lavallee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Cummings</td>
<td>J. A. Larammee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Cheneault</td>
<td>John Lacroix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimable Dusany</td>
<td>A. Lafremiere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Devine</td>
<td>Charles Langlade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Dusome</td>
<td>Joseph Lefarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Fortin</td>
<td>Pierre Lorette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Faigian</td>
<td>Mitchell George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etienne Frichette</td>
<td>Charles Passeur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Gordon</td>
<td>Augustus Precour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. C. Heneault</td>
<td>Seril Pombert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieut Ingall</td>
<td>Joseph Recolle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Jeffery</td>
<td>Thomas Rawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Jeff</td>
<td>Joseph Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Johnson</td>
<td>Francis Sicard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Keeting</td>
<td>Pierre Sorette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Kennedy</td>
<td>Widow Topier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles LaRonde</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Lanagan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. A. Laramie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. B. Lemay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Ludlow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Mitchell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edw’d McDonald</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mich’l McDonald</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Munday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asher Munday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Moberly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam’l O’Donovan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Quigley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Quigley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam’ Richardson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Rawson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Solomon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Simpson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Varnie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Wallace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Wheeler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wilson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine Brodia</td>
<td>James Armour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. B. Bouchier</td>
<td>Eli Beman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Chevritte</td>
<td>W. C. Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Farling</td>
<td>Lewis Corbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Freismith</td>
<td>Louis Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Gerro</td>
<td>J. B. Croteau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Lavallee</td>
<td>Lieut Cummings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. A. Larammee</td>
<td>Mary Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lacroix</td>
<td>James Farling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Lafremiere</td>
<td>George Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Langlade</td>
<td>J. C. Hurd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Lefarra</td>
<td>J. M. Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Lorette</td>
<td>Stephen Jeffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell George</td>
<td>A. King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Passeur</td>
<td>D. Kevolte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustus Precour</td>
<td>L. G. Labatte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seril Pombert</td>
<td>John Lacroix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Recolle</td>
<td>Thomas Leduc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Rawson</td>
<td>Baptist Legris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Roy</td>
<td>Henry Modeste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Sicard</td>
<td>Joseph Mesie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Sorette</td>
<td>D. Revolte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow Topier</td>
<td>Andrew Vasseur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Warren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

Names of parents found in the baptismal register for Ste. Anne’s Parish in 1835
source: Copy of St Ann’s Parish Registers, microfilm #1305885-1305887.

September 10, 1835:
Jean-Baptiste Rousseau and Julie Lamorandière
Antoine Lafrenière and Madeleine Letard
Dennis Lavallée and Catherine Franceau
Louis Chevalier and Marguerite Lachigan
André Cayieux (Cadieux) and Julie Duval
Pierre Sorell and Louise Labatte
Joseph Berger and Marie Laboucanne
James Farlin and Charlotte Lamorandière
John Broderick and Sally Gordon
Régis Loranger and Adélaïde Lamorandière
Charles Desjardins and Angélique Lavallée
Guillaume Star Kweather and Marguerite Pémiguishiriquou
Charles Coté and Marguerite Grave
Simon Martin and Marie Lavallée
Jacques Parisien and Marguerite Laframboise
James Cooly and Marie Connors
Charles Vasseur and Marguerite Sicequam
Thomas Leduc and Madeleine Callaghan
James Kempline and Mary Hagan
Jean Trudeau and Angélique Pamalitiowanonqui
John Sylvestre and Rose Solomon
Henry Fortin and Charlotte Laverdure
Jean-Baptiste Lacroix and Louise Desaulniers
Athaines Roi and Marguerite Langlade
Antoine Récollet and Félicité Beausoleil
Israël Mundy and Anne Bergin
Antoine Fréchette and Marie Lemai
Antoine Langevin and Marguerite (pas de nom)

September 12, 1835:  Léonard Envit and Bridandte (Bridgit) Cambell (Campbell)
November 10, 1835:  James Preston and Hélène Philips
December 1, 1835:  Samuel Solomon and Thérèse Livingston

December 18, 1835:
Simon Sicard and Marie Madoichiwanonwé
Jean St. Germain and Margurite Kinisi
Jacques Summer and Hélène Deslauriers

December 23, 1835:  Ignace Payette and Madeleine Vasseur

December 27, 1835:
Louis Chevalier and Marguerite Achigan
Pierre Laviolette and Marguerite Dusang
## Appendix 6

**Employees of the Penetanguishene Military and Naval Establishments with Métis surnames**

as listed in the *Definition of the original personnel at the Naval and Military Establishments, Penetanguishene 1817-1856* (Patterson, 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BELL John</td>
<td>interpreter, Indian Dept.</td>
<td>Nov. 1828-Feb. 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUSANG Amable</td>
<td>Indian interpreter</td>
<td>1-14 July, 1817 1828 (from Drummond Is.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARLINGER James</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Nov. 1828-Feb. 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABATTE Louis George</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACROIX Pierre</td>
<td>garrison baker</td>
<td>1837 (from Drummond Is.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFRENIERE Antoine</td>
<td>roofer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGLADE Charles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 1837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAVALLE Frances</td>
<td>canoe man</td>
<td>Aug. 24-28 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LECROIE, Jean</td>
<td>canoe man</td>
<td>Aug. 24-28 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LERONDE (La Ronde) Charles</td>
<td>canoe man</td>
<td>Aug. 24-28 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LERAMONDA (Leamonda) James</td>
<td>coast pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTAIN, Antoine</td>
<td>Canadian (guide)</td>
<td>April-May 1826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTIN Tontine</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRECOURT Augustin</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI Joseph</td>
<td>mason</td>
<td>Sept. 9-10 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCHELEAUX, Frances</td>
<td>pilot</td>
<td>June-July 1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROUSSEAU Charles</td>
<td>clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROUSSEAU Jean Baptiste</td>
<td>clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROUSSEAU, George</td>
<td>private 70th</td>
<td>Sept. 1817-July 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROUSSEAU, John</td>
<td>sawyer</td>
<td>May-Sept. 1817 Aug. 1818-Oct. 1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROY, Joseph</td>
<td>pilot</td>
<td>June 23-29 1828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLOMON William</td>
<td>(Indian Dept. interpreter)</td>
<td>1821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIBAULT, Joseph</td>
<td>(clerk Indian Dept.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUDEAU Jean Baptiste</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>May 1817-Oct. 1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEAR Charles</td>
<td>canoe man</td>
<td>Aug. 24-28 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSEUR Louis</td>
<td>(private) Michigan Fencibles War of 1812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7

Chronology of relevant dates and events

1610: Étienne Brûlé arrives in Huronia, the first European in the area

August 1615: Samuel de Champlain and Joseph Le Caron arrive in Huronia with a contingent of Frenchmen.

1639: The Jesuit mission of Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hurons is established

June 1650: The French (Jesuits, lay helpers, and soldiers) abandon Huronia and retreat to Québec

1671: St. Ignace mission founded by French missionaries on Mackinac Island and then moved just north of Michilimackinac, on the mainland on the northern side of the Mackinac Straits (in Northern Michigan today)

1690: Fort Buade established near mission of St. Ignace by the French military

1715: French military establish a fort at Michilimackinac on the south side of the Mackinac Straits.

May 9, 1729: Baptism at Michilimackinac of Charles Michel Langlade (son of Augustin Langlade and widow Domitille Villeneuve, née Nissowaquet) born in 1729; he is the first Métis of probably the oldest lineage with descendants in Penetanguishene

1733 (circa): Birth of the first child of Jean-Baptiste Latellier (employed by the Mackinac trader Simon Guillory) and his Nipissing wife, near Matchedash Bay

1761: The British take control of Fort Michilimackinac after the Seven Years’ War.

1778: George Cowan, fur trader, establishes his post at Matchedash Bay

1784: Pierre Lavallée of Sorel, a fur trader, winters at Matchedash Bay

1779-1781: The British move the fort of Michilimackinac from the mainland to the island of Mackinac, creating a second community that over the next two decades is also called Michilimackinac

1793: Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe visits Huronia and Penetanguishene Bay

1794: The Jay Treaty establishes the border between Canada and the United States

July 1796: The American military take over Mackinac Island and its fort from the British. The British move the garrison stationed there to St. Joseph Island where they establish a new fort. Voyageurs, Métis and traders follow the garrison and a community develops around this post

May 22, 1798: Signature of the Treaty between the First Nations people and the British confirming the surrender of the tract of land and harbour on the Penetanguishene Peninsula

July 17, 1812: The British take Mackinac Island back from the United States with the help of 180 Métis and voyageurs, as well as 600 First Nations volunteers

July 17, 1813: A force of about 650, including First Nations men, and 120 Michigan Fencibles (Métis and voyageurs) commanded by William McKay, arrives at Prairie du Chien and takes the post from the Americans

July 1814: Americans destroy the British fort on St. Joseph Island as well as warehouses of the North West Company but no other civilian property

July 18, 1815: The British give Mackinac Island back to the Americans and establish a new garrison on Drummond Island

1816: Fifteen lots, laid out along two streets near the fort, are occupied by civilians on Drummond Island

1817: The Penetanguishene Naval Establishments open

1818: In the Southampton (Lake Huron) area, Pierre Piché, working for Dr. David Mitchell of Drummond Island, establishes a post on the south side of the Saugeen River

1821: Merger of the two major fur companies, the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company, causes restructuring of the industry

1825: George Gordon, the father of Métis children, arrives in Penetanguishene from Drummond Island and establishes a trading post
1827: Four more families settle at Gordon's Point in Penetanguishene

November 14, 1828: The British cede Drummond Island to the Americans and move their garrison and some of the civilian inhabitants to Penetanguishene aboard two boats

Late 1820s: There are an estimated ten to fifteen thousand residents of Métis communities in the Upper Great Lakes

1829: Fishing is being carried out in Penetanguishene Bay

June 8, 1830: Surveyor General Office Map of Penetanguishene shows the names of the 43 twenty acre lot grantees along the reserve on the west side of Penetanguishene Bay; these lots are given to people displaced from Drummond Island

August, 1830: Petition to the Lieutenant Governor, signed by 43 grantees of Park lots in Penetanguishene to complain of the fee of 8 pounds to register their lots and the requirement to clear four acres of land per year

June 30 1834: At the meeting of the Executive Council Chamber in Toronto, 25 grantees of Park lots are awarded title to their lands as persons who have performed the settlement duties on this location on this Town and Park Lots at Penetanguishene and entitled to their patent deeds

1833: The first catholic church of Ste. Anne’s in Penetanguishene is built on a lot donated by Pierre Giroux; Antoine Lacourse holds classes for a group of 26 pupils in Penetanguishene, but this school is short-lived

1834: With the general decline in the fur trade, fishing, practiced by First Nation people, French-Canadians and Métis grows into an industry

September 10, 1835: Father Rémi Gaulin visits Ste. Anne’s church in Penetanguishene and performs 31 baptisms of children between the ages of 8 days to 4 years old

July 1839: Indian Officer Samuel Jarvis, during a visit to Penetanguishene, finds the house where he is staying surrounded by a number of Métis claiming their right to receive presents from the Government as do the Métis in Sault Ste. Marie

January 27, 1840: Twenty-two Métis in Penetanguishene sign a petition to the Governor General asking to be included in the distribution of presents by the Government

1842: Population of Penetanguishene is 230; creation of the first municipal government in the Penetanguishene area with Tiny and Tay townships grouped together

1844: There are four independent fur traders doing business in Penetanguishene, including Métis Andrew Mitchell

September 1, 1845: Lieutenant Harper, commanding the ship Experiment, submits a report about the necessity of settling the question of land titles along the north shore of Lake Huron including Georgian Bay in order to give deeds to Métis living on lands in this territory, and in particular in the Sault Ste. Marie area

September 25, 1845: Captain T. G. Anderson of the Indian Department recommends that the government obtain title from the First Nations people to the lands along the north shore of Lake Huron including Georgian Bay

October 10, 1845: A Committee of the executive council recommends that the government of Upper Canada (Ontario) obtain title to the lands along the north shore of Lake Huron including Georgian Bay

1846: Frank Colomus is at the head of a fishing flotilla of four boats in Penetanguishene belonging to a Métis, Andrew Mitchell

November, 1849: Mica Bay Incident. A band of 30 to 100 First Nation and Métis travel from Sault Ste. Marie along the shore of Lake Superior for about 320 km to Mica Bay and attack the mining installations of the Quebec Mining Company that is using the land without their permission. The company agent surrenders without resistance. This incident pressures the Government into securing title from the First Nations people
1849: Ontario adopts its first Crown Timber Act which grants tenure and licenses, as well as introducing stumpage and ground rents

**September 9, 1850:** Signing of the Robinson-Huron Treaties; the First Nations cede the Lake Huron shoreline, including the islands, from Matchedash Bay (Southern Georgian Bay) to Batchewanas Bay, and inland as far as the height of land

1851: Creation of the United Township of Tiny and Tay (including Penetanguishene)

1854: Start of a lumbering boom in north Simcoe County

1857 and 1858: Ontario government passes its Fisheries Act that stipulates that every net and fishing operation must be licensed, and that fishing stations on Crown land must be leased

1862: Jean-Baptiste Proulx and Charles de la Ronde, Métis fishermen, that have “old resident fishermen” status according to the Fisheries Act, are burned out of their station on Lonely Island in Northern Georgian Bay by the First Nation people of Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island in a dispute over the fishery

1865: Alfred Thompson’s fur trading operation in Penetanguishene generates $14,955 in revenue.

1868: 450 men are engaged in the Georgian Bay fishery and the catch consists of 1.2 million lb of whitefish, 707 thousand lb of trout and 8 thousand lb of pickerel

1869: Tiny Township becomes a separate township.

**December 23, 1869:** Declaration of the Provisional Government in Manitoba by the Métis led by Louis Riel

1875: Penetanguishene becomes an incorporated village (separate from Tiny Township), and then an incorporated town in 1882

1879: Arrival of the railroad in Penetanguishene which stimulates the lumber boom

**May 9-12, 1885:** Battle of Batoche marks the end of the Northwest Rebellion

**November 16, 1885:** Execution of Métis leader, Louis Riel

1891: In Tiny and Tay Townships as well as Penetanguishene and Midland, a total of 64 men declare fisherman as their occupation. Of this total, over a third, or 23 have Métis surnames.

1893: the number of licensed fishermen on Georgian Bay reaches the record level of 641.

1901: Census data for the district of Simcoe East show that the 430 declared Métis in the Penetanguishene area are found in three main centres: 94 (22 %) in Baxter Township (Honey Harbour), 124 (29 %) in Tay Township (Midland, Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour), and 180 (42 %) in Tiny Township (including Penetanguishene).

1907: Penetanguishene has six sawmills

1915: Collapse of the fishery industry in Georgian Bay, the number of men employed is half of what it was in 1890.

1940s to the 1960s: The decline in the Georgian Bay fishery continues and accelerates

2001: 48,340 people in Ontario declare Métis origins, with 4,230 in Simcoe County, including 2,750 in North Simcoe (Tiny Township, Penetanguishene, Midland and Tay Township)

**September 19, 2003:** Landmark Powley ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada

2006: 12,000 Métis officially registered with the Métis Nation of Ontario, with 2,000 of these located in the area of the Georgian Bay Métis Council
Bibliography

Primary Source Documents


Census, 1901. Statistics Canada.

Census, 1901, schedule 1. Statistics Canada. Web site: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/0201220618_e.html#Schedule1

Census, 1911. Statistics Canada.


Four years on the Georgian Bay life among the rocks, information for tourists, campers, and prospective settlers: portraying the fishing and hunting grounds, island and summer resorts, to French river, with scenic views & descriptions. Toronto: 1888, 80 pages.


Journals of the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada ...being the second session of the seventh provincial Parliament. 1863. Available on the Internet web site: http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView/9_03315_5_1/0191?id=a9c3b391df876a24&Language=en
Ontario Court (Provincial Division), Her Majesty the Queen against Steve Powley and Roddy C. Powley, Registry no. 999 93 3220, Volume VI. Submissions on trial before the honourable judge C. Vaillancourt at the City of Sault Ste. Marie on September 8 and 9, 1998. Transcription available on the Internet at: http://www.metisnation.org/harvesting/Powley/docs/court/1_court_vol6.pdf


Petition 1832. Toronto Archdiocese Archives, AAT, MAC 1703. Petition by Penetanguishene residents sent to John Colborne, Lieutenant Governor of Upper-Canada, May 10, 1832.


Ste. Anne’s Parish. St Ann’s Parish Registers held at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints Family History Centre. Microfilm #1305885-1305887. Copy at Penetanguishene’s Centennial Museum and Archives, Genealogy Room.


Public Archives of Canada (PAC)


Petition July 1830. PAC, Upper Canada Sundries. RG5, Reel C-6870, pages 57315-17. Petition dated July 27, 1830.


Petition 1833. PAC, Upper Canada Sundries. RG5, Reel C-6878, pages 69879-81. Petition (in French) to John Colborne, the Governor of Upper Canada, dated March 8, 1833.

Petition 1840. PAC, Indian Affairs Records. RG10, vol. 72, Reel C-11025, pages 67089-67090. Petition of the “undersigned half breeds residing in the Town of Penetanguishene to the Governor General”, dated January 27, 1840. Also quoted by Pat McArthur and David McNab article.

Petition 1886. PAC, Indian Affairs. RG10, vol. 1886, File 1371, Reel C-11106. “The chief and several warriors petition to have several families of half-breeds removed from the Christian Island reserve”, available on line, pages 1 to 7 at: http://mikan3.archives.ca/pam/public_mikan/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=fre&rec_nbr=2065594&rec_nbr_list=2065594&tmplt_nbr=201&item_index=1&total_items=7

Pullman, James. PAC, Civil Secretary’s Correspondence, Upper Canada Sundries, July-August 1825. RG5, A1, vol. 73, Reel C-4615, pages 38811-14. List of the Corps of Michigan Fencibles when disbanded at Michilimackinac July 1815, dated Drummond Island, July 5, 1825.


**Public Archives Ontario (PAO)**

Anderson, James. PAO, Frederick George Mackenzie Fraser fonds. F1034-B299925, File: Correspondence, 1878-1889, File 2. Copy of letter by Anderson from Midland to John Filton Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Ottawa, dated July 30, 1886.


Fraser, Samuel. PAO, Frederick George Mackenzie Fraser fonds. F 1034-B299925 File: Correspondence, 1878-1889 File 2. Handwritten copy of letter by Samuel Fraser, fishery overseer, dated Midland, January 9, 1889.


Ontario Land Records Index ca. 1780-ca.1920, PAO. Microfiche.

Penetanguishene Military Establishments Collection, PAO, Fonds F893, box MU2311.


**Secondary Sources**

**Publications**


Craig, John, *Simcoe County The Recent Past*. The Corporation of the County of Simcoe, s.l., 1977.

Drummond Island Museum, *Fort Drummond: The Last British Fort on American Soil (1815-1828)*. Drummond Island, s.d.


Gazetteer and directory of the County of Simcoe: including the District of Muskoka and the Townships of Mono and Mulmur for 1872-3.


Osborne, A. C. “The migration of *Voyageurs* from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828” in *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, vol. III. Toronto: 1901, pp. 123-166. Also available on the Internet at: [http://my.tbaytel.net/bmartin/drummond.htm](http://my.tbaytel.net/bmartin/drummond.htm)


Patterson, Gwen. Notes accompanying the 1876 Penetanguishene Assessment Rolls. At Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives, Genealogy Room, s.d..

*Penetanguishene Naval and Military Establishment (Discovery Harbour) Information Manual*, s.d.


Articles


City of Ottawa web site:


Métis Nation of Ontario web site: http://www.metisnation.org


R. v. Willison, British Columbia provincial Court ruling, full written reasons, released April 8, 2005, para. 121.


Visit Muskoka web site: http://www.visitmuskoka.com/history.htm