

Gillies Bros. Timeline

L. Dougherty June 20 2020

- **1821** - In the summer of 1821, James Gillies (a weaver, age 55) his eldest daughter Janet (age 21), and sons John (age 10) and George immigrated to Canada. They came from Kilsyth; a village 30 miles east of Glasgow Scotland aboard *the David*. His wife Helen Stark came to Canada a year later with the two younger children, James and Janet. The family settled on the west half of Lot 10, Concession 5 in Lanark Township which is approx. 3 miles from Middleville.
- **1831** – The eldest son, John Gillies received a grant for Lot 9 Concession 3 of Lanark which comprised 200 acres. This was located several miles southwest of his father’s property. He purchased an additional 100 acres for a total of 300 acres including land on both sides of the Clyde River.
- **1837** - John Gillies went to the front with the volunteers during the Rebellion of 1837-1838 (source obituary 1888).
- **1839** – John Gillies married Mary Cullen Bain on January 4 1839. Eventually, they had six sons and three daughters together. He received the patent in 1840 after completing his settlement duties.
- **1842** - John Gillies built a dam and a small water-driven sawmill on the Clyde River, a tributary of the Mississippi, approx. 2 miles from Lanark Village. This mill was built entirely of wood except for a 90 pound single saw. He sold lumber to the local building trade from his own homestead and his father’s land. He floated logs down the Clyde River to his mill. Lumber sold for \$6.00 to \$8.00 per thousand board feet at this time. He also did custom sawing for his neighbors. He frequently walked to Belleville one day and home the next carrying his purchases with him.
- **1853** – John Gillies formed a partnership with Peter McLaren (age 22) who handled bush operations while John looked after the manufacturing and business aspects. In 1873, partnership dissolved when John sold up to finance his sons to buy Braeside Mills.
- **1853-1856** – Gillies added a grist mill, oatmeal mill and a custom carding mill which was overseen by Hugh Ackland (great grandfather of Arnold Gillies Muirhead).
- **1859** – The Brockville and Ottawa Railway reached Carleton Place opening up a large market in the United States for sawn lumber.
- **1861** – Built a “good house”, according to Arnold Gillies Muirhead at what is now known as Herron’s Mills. It is shown as an un-named hamlet on Walling’s Map of 1863 and is still standing in 2020.
- **1862** – After he used up all the large pine on the Clyde River John Gillies obtained the Gilmour Timber Limits (300 acres) at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River which spread over six townships. He prospered over the years, and besides sawing lumber for local use, took out several rafts of square white pine, taken to Quebec via the Mississippi, Ottawa. He also used the Trent River through Belleville and via the St. Lawrence to Quebec City to transport sawlogs.

- **1866** – John Gillies obtained a long-term lease of the Muirhead sawmill in Carleton Place which he rebuilt and enlarged to saw the output of the Gilmour Limit. He continued to live in Gillies Mills until 1871.
- **1871** – John Gillies moved with his family to Carleton Place (53 George Street) and sold his Gillies Mills property to John and James Herron.
- **1872** - Almonte Gazette 1872-03-22 Page 2 - *“Two years ago (1870) Braeside was a portion of the primeval forest, not a tree cut, but an old clearance lay near the spot made 30 years ago by Mr. Jason Gould.”*
- **1872** - Almonte Gazette 1872-03-22 Page 2. *The Rev. E. H. Jenkyns, M. A., County Inspector of Public Schools for Renfrew, is now on his semi-annual tour. He reports that the schools of the villages of Arnprior, Braeside, Burnstown, and White Lake are in a very efficient state. It would be well for all the teachers in the South Riding to imitate the model inculcating instruction adopted by the Head Masters of the Public Schools of Arnprior and Braeside There are twenty per cent of the schools in the County of Renfrew shut up, owing to the scarcity of teachers. Salaries have largely increased this season. Sections that were giving last year are now giving \$600. A new and elegant school house, with all the modern appliances, and a teacher’s residence, is now being erected at Braeside, the property of the Hon. A. B. Foster. It is to be seated like the High and Normal Schools in Edinburgh, the seats rising above each other and a semi-circular area in front for large classes.*
- **1873** – The four eldest sons of John and Mary Gillies arrived in McNab Township – where they found “Fair the Land and Strong the People”. James, William, John Jr. & David bought the Braeside Mills and the Coulonge Timber Limits (250 square miles on the Coulonge River in Quebec) from Hon. Asa B. Foster for \$195,000,000. Foster had purchased Usborne’s Mill in 1870 from Reverend Henry Usborne for \$60,000.00.
- **1873** – John Gillies was now 63. He loaned money to his son George who operated an iron and steel factory in Gananoque. George eventually sold it to Stelco Inc. of Hamilton.
- **1873** - Shortly after the purchase, an economic depression caused the Braeside Mill to remain idle for four years. The only revenue came from floating square timber to Quebec City for export to UK markets. John Gillies financed the sons, charging them 5% interest when the going rate was 8%.
- **1874** – Gillies’ partnership with Peter McLaren was dissolved. McLaren paid John Gillies \$300,000.00 and the firm became McLaren Lumber Co. (McLaren sold in 1887 for \$900,000.00 to a syndicate called the Canada Lumber Co. and retired to Perth. He built a large house called Nevis house and was appointed to Senate by Sir John A. Macdonald).
- **Circa 1874** – John Gillies formed a partnership with Ferdinand Beyer so that his youngest son Alexander could go into business known as the Central Canada Works. Beyer was a Swiss who previously worked in Smith’s Falls for the Frist and Wood Farm Machinery Co. from 1864-1871 and in Gananoque with E.E. Abbot after 1871.
- **1875** – John Gillies built three large stone buildings to house a water powered machine shop and foundry situated on the north bank of the Mississippi River at the rapids about 100 yards downstream from the railway bridge.

- **1876** – The Carleton Place Herald (April 12 1876) advertised that “the Canada Machine Works were dealing in forgings, castings in iron and brass, repairs of any kind and agents for wood & wood working machinery and French Burr Mill Stones for the Messrs Goldie & McCulloch until their own resources were developed.” They produced steam engines, gasoline engines, motor boats, and sawmill and textile machinery.
- **1878** - Alexander Gillies died in a duck hunting accident Sept 17 1878. His partner Ferdinand Beyer went on to Dakota and died in 1884. The partnership was dissolved and the business continued as John Gillies & Co.
- **1880** - James Gillies (D.A. Gillies father) was president of the Gillies Bros. Lumber Manufacturers in Braeside but remained in Carleton Place. He purchased the Hawthorne Woolen Mill in Carleton Place from A. Code of Innisville which had been idle for several years. He sold it two years later to William H. Wylie for a small profit.
- **1880** - The Almonte Gazette reported that the mill sawed an average of 500 logs per day and employed over 200 men who were paid \$1.25 per day.
- **1882** – John Gillies bought the woolen mill property of Archibald McArthur for \$40,000.00. It was a four ½ story building built in 1870 located directly across from the machine shop and foundry. It was a water-driven mill which was operated under the name Gillies, Son & Company – the son being his eldest; James Gillies (1840-1909)
- **1882**- Sept 8 issue of “The Globe” Toronto (pg.8) recorded the names of the prize winners at the Fourth Annual Fair of the Industrial Association of Ontario (forerunner of the Canadian National Exhibition). A citation reads “*For the best and most stylish tweeds of any wool, any weight and Scotch finish: Gillies, Son & Co. of Carleton Place deservedly carry off gold medal for twelve splendid pieces.*”
- **1884** – John Gillies built a combination bridge and dam over the Mississippi River to connect his woolen mill with his machine shop. It is called “The Gillies Bridge”.
- **1885** – Canadian Pacific Railway completed Montreal to Vancouver thus placing Braeside on main line in an advantageous position to ship lumber either to Canadian or U.S. markets through Brockville, Ontario. Exporting lumber to United Kingdom markets was made through Montreal.
- **1888** – John Gillies died August 11 1888 age 77. His wife survived him for 12 years. His executors were his five surviving sons and his lawyer Joseph Jamieson of Almonte.
- **1888** – Gillies Bros. either built or purchased the Braeside Inn located at the northwest corner of Pem-Ott or River Road and Osborne Street above Arthur’s Hill (County Road 1). Prior to that the Inn was operated by Joe Henry and known as Henry’s Inn.
- **1893** – Partnership was formed as an incorporated limited private company known as Gillies Bros. Ltd. The company rebuilt and enlarged the Braeside Mill entirely. They replaced the circular saws for band saws increasing output to 35 million F.B.M. [F.B.M. = foot board thousand. The letter "M" stands for 1,000 in the lumber industry, so "MBF" is the abbreviation for 1,000 board feet.] annual capacity. The machine shop in Carleton Place built the steam engine for the new works and transported it thirty miles to Braeside in the winter time by sleigh.
- **1895**- November 28 1895, Ontario Letters Patent were obtained incorporating The John Gillies Estate Company Ltd.

- **1895** – Club rooms were built on Arthur’s Hill to house seasonal workers. Later this building served as a community centre.
- **1896** – Gillies Bros. of Braeside Lumber production was reported as being 35,000,000 (compared to 54,000,000 at McLachlin Bros. of Arnprior and 115,000,000 by J.R. Booth).
- **1897** – The executors of the estate of John Gillies wound-up the businesses of John Gillies & Co. (foundry and machine shop) and Gillies, Son and Company (manufacturers of wool & woolen goods) into the new company The John Gillies Estate Company Ltd. Each of the five sons subscribed for 150 shares each in the new company at \$100.00 per share and the estate received \$450 shares.
- **1899** – Gillies built the “Klondike” Mill at Black Point to produce cedar shingles and railway ties. A 1909 newspaper article reported that the mill had the capacity to produce 150,000 ties and 35,000,000 shingles in one season. It was equipped with one circular saw and six shingle machines at that time.
- **1900** – July 16 1900 John Gillies Estate Company sold the Woolen Mill Department to Canada Woolen Mills Ltd. of Toronto for \$35,000.00. They had already operated a mill in Carleton Place at this time but by 1904 they were up for sale and assets were sold in September 1904. As a result, the mill was repossessed by The John Gillies Estate Company.
- **1900** - Over the years the business expanded and profits were ploughed back into the family firm. Additional timber limits were acquired on the upper tributaries of the Ottawa River, Lake Temiskaming, Petawawa, Black, Schyan and Montreal Rivers and Temagami Lakes.
- **1901** - A new brick office building on Arthur’s Hill was completed in 1901 and later enlarged in 1955.
- **1903** – Last square timber raft down the Ottawa to Quebec City with D.A. Gillies (following in his father and grandfather’s footsteps) on board working as a clerk.
- **1904** – The Mechanical Dept. of The John Gillies Estate Company of 1904 advertised on its invoice that they were manufacturers of stationary and marine gasoline engines, gasoline and steam launches, steam engines, water wheels, sawmill machinery, lath and re-sawing machines, shafting pulleys, gearing etc. They owned the sole Canadian rights for the Acme Coal Oil Engine.
- **1905** – Name was changed to Gillies Bros. & Co. Ltd.
- **1907** – The last Gillies Bros. Ltd. raft was sent down the St. Lawrence River.
- **1907** – The John Gillies Estate Co. Ltd. woolen mill (repossessed in 1904) was sold to Bates & Innes Co. Ltd.
- **1909** – January 22 1909, James Gillies died four days before his 69th birthday. He was responsible for the financial administration of both the Mechanical and Woolen Departments as well as being president of Gillies Bros. Limited of Braeside.
- **1910** – July 4 1910 – West Yard Burned Completely. 29,750,000 F.B.M lumber destroyed.
- **1911** – Bates & Innes Co. Ltd. purchased the machine works in Carleton Place and converted it into a felt mill.
- **1917** – The John Gillies estate was wound up and the last of its assets were distributed among the heirs in January 1917.
- **1919** – June 23 – The Braeside Mill was totally destroyed by fire.

- **1921** – New fireproof electrically driven mill constructed at Black Point, the only one of its kind in Canada at that date. Gillies Bros. new 'fireproof' mill at Braeside was built with reinforced concrete and eight-inch brick walls on solid rock. The firm took every precaution available to prevent another fire in their mill. According to the Canada Lumberman magazine, the new mill had a daily cutting capacity of 150,000 feet when it opened in 1921.
- **1927** - An electrically driven planing mill was located on the south side of the Canadian Pacific Railroad between the East and West lumber yards. Built in 1927, it had one railway siding to deliver sawn white pine to the planer and another to carry dressed lumber to the main line.
- **1945** – A modern band mill and town site was built at Temagami on White Bear and Rabbit Lakes, with 103 miles of shoreline covered by virgin pine forest.
- **1945** - The organization of the company was changed when Gillies Brothers, Limited ceased to exist and was replaced by a new, federally incorporated company, Gillies Bros. & Co. The exclusive ownership of the company by the Gillies family ended, with the distribution of shares to members of senior management.
- **1947** – Gillies established a lumber mill 3 miles east of Temagami and built a housing site for employees. It employed 105 men and produced 65,000,000 board feet annually by 1958.
- **1953** – The *William Douglas Tug Boat* was scrapped in Red Pine Bay. It towed the booms on the Ottawa River at Braeside.
- **1954** – Waltham Mill (Quebec) was built during winter of 1954/55. It was designed by Brodie Gillies to run all year round producing hardwood lumber and commenced operation March 7 1955.
- **1955** – Extension and modernization at the Braeside office.
- **1957** – Club Rooms were demolished.
- **1958** – Temagami shut down after 10 years of operation.
- **1958** – Gillies Bros. & Co. Ltd. modernized its plant in 1958, under a General Process and Master Plan. Brodie Gillies was chiefly responsible for making the plan a reality. The debarking mill, dry kilns, storage sheds were now on a year-round sawing basis. Storage sheds replace 8 miles of lumber drying tracks. Improvements at Braeside included conversion to a completely electrical operation. The firm invested in steam heated dry kilns which enclosed five acres of separate buildings. The aim was to increase the capacity to handle all annual cuts that had been previously processed in Temagami in addition to the Braeside location, and operate year round. They hoped to produce one-inch boards in as little as two weeks compared to the 6 to 12 months it required before automation. The Kiln enclosure was 350 feet long, had the capacity of 650,000 board feet which turned over twice a week. The drying process reached 165 degrees and 145 degrees humidity and used air vents on the roof to allow moisture to escape. Once out of the kiln the lumber was held 3 -4 days in a conditioning shed to allow for equalization before being finished. 3 inch premium grade pine destined for the UK had a slightly higher moisture content (between 7%-9%) because of their more moist climate.
- **1959** – According to a newspaper article November 1959, the Braeside Mill had a daily capacity of 160,000,000 board feet per year and employed 250 men. Same article reported that the Waltham Mill was producing 6 million board feet annually with 40 men. Hardwood was trucked

to mill as the sawlogs wouldn't float. Annual payroll of three mills was \$742,300.00. Woods operations employ 650 men with a payroll of 957,200.00. Markets for Gillies Bros & Co. were in Ontario & Quebec 40%, United Kingdom (25%), United States (10%) and the British West Indies (5%).

- **1963** - Gillies Bros. & Co. was sold in 1963 to Consolidated Paper Corporation Ltd. (which later became Consolidated- Bathurst Inc. and still later Stone- Consolidated Inc.). Gillies continued to exist as a separate company under its president Arnold Gillies Muirhead (grandson of James Gillies), within Consolidated-Bathurst until 1967 when he retired at age 65. This was a turning point for the family firm. Consolidated-Bathurst Inc. was one of the largest pulp and paper companies in Canada with sawmills in Grande Mere, Shawinigan Falls, Trois Rivieres and Port Alfred, Quebec. Consolidated Bathurst acquired Gillies' Quebec Limits which boarded on their own. They were able to use the hardwood which was bypassed by Gillies Bros. for their new pulp mill in Portage duFort. The Quebec Government allowed Consolidated Bathurst to bring 20 Thousand Board feet per year of sawlogs to be exported from Quebec to Braeside for 21 years – contrary to their own ban. Kiln supervisor was Bob Proulx of Braeside.
- **Circa 1970** – Bill 'Bud' Gillespi took over as General Manager from Arnold Gillies Muirhead. He persuaded Consolidated Bathurst to close the Pembroke sawmill and send the sawlogs down to Braeside. This increased production at Braeside from approx. 25 million board feet to 40 million board feet per year.
- **1974** - The 95 foot chimney from the original mill was a local landmark until it was demolished on the 23rd of May, 1974.
- **1976** - The Arnprior Chronicle newspaper reported that the fire at Gillies Bros., which occurred on October 16, 1976, destroyed approximately one half of the company.
- **1978** - The reconstructed site was officially opened on August 25, 1978. Featuring new pumping and sprinkler systems in all buildings as well as separate storage sheds to control fire, it was described as an "ultra-modern lumber manufacturing facility".
- **1978** - Gillies Bros. & Co. ceased to exist in 1978, when all the company's assets were officially passed to Consolidated-Bathurst Inc. However, the "Gillies" trademark continued to exist, and was assigned to a new company under the name of Gillies Inc. Lumber bearing the Gillies trademark continued to be produced at Braeside, but also in other mills located in Quebec.
- **1984** – Ottawa Valley is named Canada's Forestry Capital. Gillies held an open house. 50 million board feet being produced annually (makes enough lumber in a day for 20 houses). Braeside still receiving 80% of its saw logs by water.
- **1990** - Braeside office that had formerly been maintained by Gillies was closed on July 15, 1990.
- **1991** – Last log boom down the Ottawa River past Braeside
- **1992** - The mill at Braeside was closed on May 1, 1992, following the imposition of new lumber tariffs by the United States and the end of the 21 year agreement to allow the export of Quebec saw logs to Ontario.

- **1994** - In February 1994, Tembec Inc. opened part of the mill for drying and planing operations which created about 65 jobs. They leased the site for 6 months and then purchased it in June at which time they announced temporary layoffs of 17 of their 77 employees. Tembec held their grand opening in September of 1994
- **1996** – Volunteers organized a flotilla at Red Pine Bay – keeping the lumbering heritage on the Ottawa River alive.
- **2008** - July 2008, Tembec closed their operation at Braeside.
- **2012** – Buildings were completely demolished.