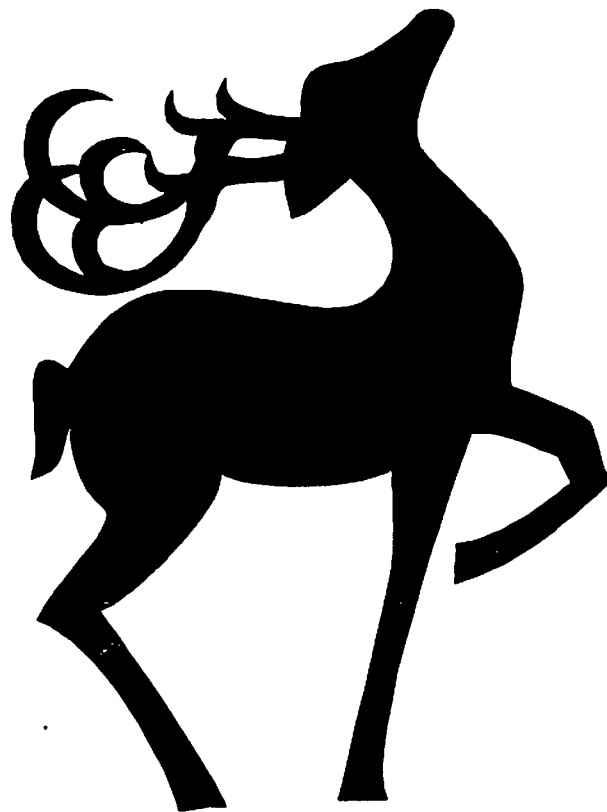


Some Legends and Myths of the Nipissing  
Tribal Indians

By  
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Introduction by / Computer Type up by  
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## **Introduction**

The legends a people possess, serve to explain aspects of life that can not be understood under direct observation. It is important that these stories be remembered and preserved in order to keep the traditions and beliefs alive for future generations.

The legends and stories of the Nipissing Lake tribal Indians not only entertain but also teach valuable lessons about the possible dangers that come with living so close to nature. They also act as a tool to connect our people to the physical and spiritual worlds that exist within all of us. They also instill the need for respect when dealing with the world around us and to accept the inevitable conclusion that nature and the human soul (spirit) and connect there in cannot ever be fully understood.

**Minawanishikogang**  
**(The one that brings Joy to the heart)**

Perhaps the biggest single religious influence on the Lake Nipissing Indians of this century was that of the Catholic priest, Father Leopold Porcheron. There are two reasons for this memory remaining strong in the hearts of the Nipissing Ojibways. First, Father Porcheron was among them for forty-two years; and secondly, he lived such a humble existence

Father Porcheron was a missionary priest to the Indians. The Nipissing and Dokis, as well as other Indian reserves taught Father Porcheon how to speak their language. After he learned how to speak Ojibway, the old priest said mass in Ojibway whenever he traveled to a reserve.

Whenever he traveled, Father Porcheron either walked or hitched hiked. The old priest did this to show everyone that the white-man was no better than the Indian was. In fact, this was Father Porcheron's main point that he tried to impress upon the Indians; no men were better than they were, and they ere better than no man.

Father Porcheron, was a man who lived very poorly. All his clothes were second-hand. Some people say they often say the old priest wearing two different kinds of socks. Frequently, his food and lodgings came in the form of handouts. When Father Porcheron can to the Nipissing Reserve, he would sleep on the floor at Ernest Couchie's house, or at the church at Couchie's Point.

"He was a very dedicated priest." That's what people who knew Father Porcheron, said of him.

To the Memory of  
**Father Leopold Porcheron, S.J.**

*Born - June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1883*

*Entered the Society of Jesus - 1902*

*Ordained Priest - July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1917*

*Missionary among the Ojibways - 42 years*

*Entered the Peace of the Lord - February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1963*

**Words by Samuel DeChamplain  
July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915  
(Translation)**

“Pursuing our way by land and leaving the said Algonquin river, we crossed several lakes, the savages carrying their canoes, until we entered the lake of the Nipiserinj at a latitude of forty-six degrees and a fourth. And on the twenty-sixth day of the said month after travelling both over land and through the lakes twenty-five leagues, or thereabouts, we reached the huts of the savages, where we stayed with them two days. They received us very well and were in goodly number; they are people whom till the earth very little.

The said people were seven to eight hundred in number who ordinarily live on the lake, where there is a great number of very pleasant islands. The north side of the said lake is very attractive, with fine meadows for the grazing of cattle and several small rivers flowing into the lake.

They did their fishing in a lake abounding in a variety of fish, among which one is excellent, having a length of one foot. The lake is some eight leagues in width and twenty-five in length. Into it flows a river coming from the northwest, which they take to barter the goods, which we give them in exchange for pelts. That with the inhabitants who make a living out of hunting and fishing in a country abundantly stocked with wildlife, birds as well as fish.”

## **Legends by - Unknown Tellers**

### **Legend – 1**

The Shaking tent was a huge tent constructed of heavy poles and animal hides. When properly built, with poles implanted in the ground, the efforts of a dozen strong men could not move the tent. Yet, when a single medicine man that knew how to unleash the power of the shaking tent, entered the tent and called upon the spirits, the tent would begin to shake. Shaking the tents were used in finding answers to questions or foretelling the future.

### **Legend – 2**

Most of the islands on Lake Nipissing have a story. This story is about the Haunted Island.

Once there was an Ojibway Chief named White Owl, whom had daughter called Snowbird. One day, Snowbird and her boyfriend, who was an Iroquois, decided to take a canoe and run away. Soon afterwards Chief White Owl went looking for them. White Owl was very angry with the young Iroquois for taking his daughter away from him. When White Owl finally caught up with the Iroquois and his daughter, the Chief tortured the Iroquois, then burnt the young man to death in a huge fire.

Snowbird, grieving for her lover and angry for what her father had done, threw herself in the fire with her boyfriend.

And to this day, when you go by the island and listen to the Southeast wind, you can hear Snowbird crying for her lover.

## **Legends by – Ernest Couchie [1887 – 1986]**

### **Legend – 1**

Many years ago, when the Iroquois were raiding deep into Ojibway territory, the Iroquois often used Ojibway captives as guides. On one particular occasion two Ojibway captives were guiding a small group of Iroquois', down a river. The two Ojibways knew the river, while the Iroquois did not. So, the Ojibways made a plan of escape, from their knowledge of the river. Being able to speak freely, because the Iroquois could not understand their language, one Ojibway man turned to the other and said, "We are nearing the falls. Just before we get there, we will jump from the canoe to the rocks and the head of the falls."

The other Ojibway agreed to the plan. So, when their canoe passed close to the bare rocks in the river, the two Ojibways leaped from their canoe to the safety of the rocks. Then, before they realized what was happening, the Iroquois left in the canoes became trapped in the strong current that quickly pulled them over the edge of the falls.

Because of this, the waterfall came to be known as Iroquois Falls.

## Legend – 2

Many years ago, a band of Ojibways, who lived in the French River area, just south of Nipissing, made their living from net fishing. In one particular season, a rash of thefts occurred on their fishing nets. To stop this, the Ojibways decided to stay overnight near their nets, in order to catch the thieves.

So, this they did. Then, as darkness settled upon them, they noticed some canoes approaching their nets. It was the thieves coming to rob the nets again! The Ojibway fishermen jumped into their canoes and headed out across the water to catch the culprits.

But, as they approached the thieves, they were quickly noticed. Immediately, the thieves turned their canoes and headed back in the direction from which they came. The Ojibway fisherman pursued them to a steep rock cliff on the south shore of Lake Nipissing called Cross Point.

The fleeing canoes began heading towards the huge cliff. Believing that they had the thieves cornered, the Ojibways pursued them with great confidence. Then, suddenly, the cliff opened up, and the mysterious thieves paddled into this opening. And as suddenly as it opened, the cliff closed, leaving the Ojibways a gasp. The Ojibway fishermen had been chasing members of a legendary ghost tribe called Memegwaysuk!

## Legend – 3

A young Ojibway man and woman, newly married, were living a short distance from an Ojibway village near Lake Nipissing. At this same time a band of Iroquois were roaming through the area, and by chance, came across the young Ojibway couple. The Iroquois immediately took them prisoner, and decided to use the young Ojibways as guides.

Then, the Iroquois took to their canoes, with the Ojibway couple, and paddled across Lake Nipissing to an island in the French River where the Iroquois thought it would be safe to camp.

The Ojibway villagers, saw this, but were afraid to attack the Iroquois' outright. So, the Ojibway villagers decided to instead to follow the Iroquois, but from a safe distance.

When night came, the Iroquois made camp on the small island, and commenced dancing and singing. This the Iroquois did until just before sunrise of the next day, when the last of the party finally went to sleep. Then, with all the camp asleep the Ojibways who followed the Iroquois, slipped into the camp, freed the young Ojibway captives, and killed all the Iroquois.

For many years afterwards, the bones of the Iroquois littered the face of this island. Today though, nothing by the name, Skull Island, remains.

**Legends by – Ephraim Couchie  
[1918 – 1975]**

## Legend – 1

One time there was a fight between two bands near the French River. One of the bands needed to pick blue berries for their food supplies and therefore wanted a "cease fire". But the other band refused to have a cease-fire. So, the band that wanted a cease-fire began to pray to their god to stop the sun. In this way, the blue berry season would not end before the fight was over.

Their god heard their prayers and answered them by stopping the sun until the fight was over.

The fighting continued, and the band that prayed for the sun to stop, won the fight. Then they picked their blue berries, and had enough food supplies to keep from going hungry.

### **Legends by - Mike Restoule [Unknown]**

#### **Legend – 1**

Windigos are half man and half devil. They have the power to change to the forms of different beasts. In this story, the Windigo is half man and half wolf.

An old man and his young granddaughter were working back in the forest on the old man's trap line. Although they had been working all day, there was still much to do. But, it was approaching nightfall, so the old man told his granddaughter to head back home while he went on up the trap line. So, the young girl obeyed her grandfather and began her journey home.

It was mid-winter, and the snow lay thick on the ground. Although the young girl wore a long dress, which was quite unsuitable for walking in the bush and snow, she managed to keep fairly steady pace. But, eventually, after crossing streams were occasionally on of her feet would break through the ice. The hem of the young girl's dress became laden with water, which froze.

Darkness was beginning to shroud the forest, and there was still some distance yet to go. Then, suddenly, there was a sound, like footsteps in the snow, far behind her! And even further off in the distance came the sound of howling wolves. The young girl stopped to listen more carefully. The howling continued, but the sound of the footsteps stopped. The young girl continued walking, and again the sound of footsteps came. Once more, the young girl stopped, and once more the footsteps ceased. She looked back on her trail, but it was too dark to see anything. The young girl became frightened for deep inside her, she knew it was ... a Windigo! She began to run, and likewise the footsteps behind her quickened. Soon, though, the deep snow and the ice on her dress began to tire and slow the young girl down. The footsteps were getting closer. In a very short time, the Windigo could catch up with her unless she thought of some way of saving herself. So, in desperation, the young girl ran off the trail and climbed a tall tree. Moments later, the Windigo came following along on here tracks.

At the bottom of the tree, the Windigo stopped, and began to look about in a puzzled sort of way. It couldn't figure out why the tracks would just suddenly end. The Windigo, being a very stupid creature, wasn't smart enough to look up into the tree. But the Windigo did know that the young girl was somewhere close by, so it gathered up some sticks and birch bark and made a fire near the bottom of the tree. Then, as the

young girl looked on in horror, the beast took a knife from its ragged clothing, sliced a chunk of its own stomach off, and stuck the chunk of meat onto the end of a stick! Then the Windigo roasted the meat in the fire, and ate it.

All night, the Windigo sate below the tree, and eventually the young girl became so tired of waiting for the beast to leave, then she fell asleep.

When morning came, the young girl woke to find that the Windigo had left. So, in great relief the young girl climbed down to three and continued on her way.

**Legends by – Angus Restoule  
[Unknown]**

“ ... you know, that time, we had no radio or nothing at all. My dad, we asked, to tell us a story. That’s the time he’d tell us a story. Let’s sees, lots a stories he’d tell us, but a, you know, I forgot, me too, stories. But a, by myself, by-gees! I liked them stories, you know.”

“ My sons, thy don’t like those stories at all. They don’t like old stories... They’re not interested at all. I don’t know why... Sometimes I try to tell them. --- ‘No’. They don’t listen to me.

But me, my dad when he talked, when he told me those stories, holy-gees! I could sit there all night and listen to him, I like them stories.”

**Legend – 1**

Once, Iroquois raided and Ojibway village by Lake Nipissing and took all the food supplies. Then, the Iroquois went to one of the islands on the Lake.

The chief of the Ojibway band, who was a man with special powers, say the Iroquois escape with all the Ojibway supplies. So, he changed himself into a bird and followed them to the island. Then, the Ojibway followed the words of their chief and attacked the Iroquois, killing all of them, and took back the stolen supplies.

**Legend – 2**

One time, my dad took a priest from Dokis Bay by birch bark canoe out to visit some other people along the French River. My dad’s brother warned him not to take the priest because he (my dad’s brother) had heard that someone wanted to shoot the priest. My dad told his brother not to worry, and he set out in the canoe with the priest. When they drew near and Indian village the people there began to shout. “Don’t come here! Don’t come here!”

Near by the river, standing alone and pointed a gun was an Indian man. The priest told my dad, “don’t stop Joe, keep going”. So, as the canoe came to shore, the priest mad the sign of the cross, and the people became astonished because the priest was not harmed. Then, the priest left the canoe and walked over to where the man with the gun was standing.



Again, the priest made the sign of the cross, and at that same moment the man dropped his gun and said, "I was overcome by a great fire, just like being burned. Never again! Never will I try to kill anyone again".

### **Legend – 3**

An old man had a kingfisher in his house. He kept the little bird tied so it wouldn't fly away. A young Indian boy saw the bird and felt sorry for it. So, the young boy set the kingfisher free.

Many years later, when the boy became a man, the Iroquois, who were roaming through the region, captured the young man and tied him to poles in the lake. Then the Iroquois left the young man to suffer from hunger and cold.

Then, a little kingfisher, seeing the young man's predicament, went to the young man and said to him, "Once you helped me, now I shall help you".

Then the little bird untied the ropes and the young man went free

### **Legend – 4**

Once my father took my mother and I out hunting on the lake. I was just young, and living at home at the time. Well, after a day of hunting we were on our way back home when we saw something on the water. My mother said it first and I thought it was a big otter passing in front of our canoe. Then, suddenly my father grabbed his gun and said; "that's no otter that's a snake!" It was about thirty feet long, according to my father.

When we were about twenty feet away from it my father shot it. The snake immediately made a great crashing splash, and then sank in the whirlpool of water.

### **Legend – 5**

Many years ago a group of about two hundred Iroquois roamed into the Lake Nipissing area. They then happened upon the lodge of an Ojibway trapper and his family. The trapper's wife was not at the lodge when the Iroquois arrived, so only the trapper and his son were taken prisoner.

It was the middle of winter and the trapper was just finishing work on a new pair of snowshoes when he was taken prisoner.

The Iroquois took the trapper and his son out onto Lake Nipissing and told the prisoners to demonstrate how well they could run on the snowshoes.

So, the trapper and his son began to run on their snowshoes. Then the trapper called out to his son not to stop, but to keep on running to the shore of the lake. The Iroquois, seeing the young boy running away, decided not to go after him because they thought that the young boy would eventually freeze to death anyway.

Then the Iroquois formed a big circle around the trapper and again told him to demonstrate how fast he could run on his snowshoes. So, the trapper began to run around this circle.

Suddenly, a blinding snowstorm came upon them, and the trapper took his chance to escape.

The trapper ran to the shore and joined up with his son. Together they went to the lodge and relative who lived near by.

The next day the trapper headed back to his lodge to get his wife. On his way there he came upon the place where he had left the Iroquois. The Iroquois were still there, but now they were all lying on the snow, frozen to death.

### **Legend – 6**

One time, there was an Indian man who went to the rapids near Dokis Bay to do some fishing. While setting up camp by the water, the man began to sense something in the air. So, he moved his camp, to a rocky cliff that was a good advantage point and a more defensible position.

The man had a feeling it was a Windigo that was coming, and there was nothing he could do but wait for it.

So, the man waited. A long time went by, and eventually he became tired and fell asleep.

As soon as the man went to sleep, the Windigo came into the camp, pulled out a knife, and put the blade to the man's throat, but the Windigo realized that if it killed the man then, it would have nothing to carry the man's body in. So, the Windigo decided to go back to its lodge and get a sack.

As the Windigo was leaving the man's camp, the man awoke and noticed it. The man watched the Windigo for a moment, to see the direction in which it was headed. Then, the man ran to the river, dove in, and swam across to the other side to ambush the Windigo

When the Windigo reached the spot at which the man was hidden, the man sprang out at the Windigo and clubbed it to death with a stick.

### **Legend – 7**

Many years ago four Indians, a man and his wife and another man and woman, came into the Dokis Bay area from down south. After setting up camp, they decided to go spearing for sturgeon. So, the married couple got in their canoe and the other man and woman got in their canoe, and they all headed out for spearing grounds. But spearing sturgeon was not the reason why the married man wanted to go out in the canoe with his wife. The married man and the unmarried woman were in love with each other, so the married man wanted to get rid of his wife. So, when the two canoes got far enough apart, the married man took his canoe to shore and killed his wife. Then, he hid her body under a big tree.

When the married man finally joined up with the other canoe, he told the other man and woman that his canoe was attacked by a water monster, and took his wife. The single man, not believing this, went back to camp and built a shaking tent to find out what really happened. When he built the tent and asked it what had really happened to the married man's wife, a turtle appeared on the tent and told the man that her husband had killed the married woman. Then, the turtle went to the water and the single man followed it by canoe to the big tree where the married woman's body was hidden. At this, the single

man became so angry that he sought out the married man and killed him for murdering this wife.

**Legends by – Elize Restoule  
[Unknown]**

“You know, the way his stories are, that Nanibush, what I heard about it, it’s my old grandma, one of them, old Theresa. Your mother must remember her that’s one of my grandmas. It’s my mother’s aunt. She was good to tell those kind of stories. How many times we sat around listening to her while sitting down smoking her pipe. We used to sit hours and hours listening to her.”

**Legend – 1**

Where did lichen come from?

Well, Nanibush was hungry one time so he invited some ducks to come to a party.

When the ducks came to the party Nanibush played music and sang for them. After a while, Nanibush said; “When I sing and play for you again, form a big circle and try dancing with your eyes closed”/

“With our eyes closed?”, said the ducks. “Oh! That sounds like fun.”

So, when Nanibush began to play and sing, the ducks started to dance with their eyes closed.

Then, as Nanibush sang, he began to grab the ducks, one by one, break their necks, and pitch them out of the circle. But, one of the ducks peeped and saw what Nanibush was doing, so it yelled; “He’s killing us!”

At this, all the ducks flew away.

Nanibush then picked up the ducks that he had killed, brought them back to his lodge, and cleaned them. Then, stuck them in the ground beneath his campfire to let the ducks cook over night.

Nanibush was tired, so he laid down near the fire and told his ass to watch the ducks while he went to sleep.

When Nanibush went to sleep, someone came and stole his ducks, leaving only the ducks’ feet sticking out of the ashes.

The next morning, when Nanibush woke up, he went to the fire, saw the ducks’ feet sticking out of the ashes, and picked one of them up. “Oh”, he thought. “this one is over cooked.”

Then, Nanibush brushed away the ashes and found that there was nothing there but ducks’ feet.

“My ducks have been stolen!” He cried. Then, Nanibush became angry at his ass for not watching his ducks. So, to punish his ass, Nanibush put it in the fire. When he did this, Nanibush cried out of pain, for not only did he punish his ass, but he punished himself too. To cool himself off, Nanibush ran to a big rock and slid down the rock.

When Nanibush did this, he left some of his skin on the rock, and that is where lichen came from.

### **Legend – 2**

Once my mother told us a story about a mother and her child who lived alone. One day, a man came to her house and knocked on her door. She locked the door and he told her that he came to save her and her little boy from the Windigos, which were coming her way. So, she opened the door and let the man in.

The Windigos were going to kill them, but the man had a plan to prevent this. The first thing the man proposed was building a house underground; and the second, that the woman let him take her child away for a while. The man told the woman that he was going to cross the ocean with the little boy on his shoulders. The woman startled at this, but the man went on to explain that the deeper the water got, the taller he became, so that the water would not go any higher than his waist.

The woman was hesitant to let her son go, but finally she did agree to the man's plan.

So, the man built her house underground, and he told the woman; "It will take me seven days to cross the ocean. When I reach the other side, I will call out the boy's name. Then, when all is safe, I will bring the boy back to you."

The man also told the woman not to leave her underground house until he had returned. Then, the man took the little boy and left.

Six days later, as the woman sat along in her underground house, the Windigos came. There were a great many of them, and they ran about her roof barking and growling all the sixth day and all the sixth night. On the seventh day, the sound of the little boy's name came through the air, from over the ocean. When the Windigos heard the boy's name, they all ran to the ocean and tried to swim across it to get the little boy, but the ocean was too big for the Windigos to swim, so they all drowned.

Seven days later, the man and the little boy returned. From that time onward, the mother and her child never had any trouble with the Windigos again.

### **Legend – 3**

There once was an old man who had the ability to sense when Windigos were coming.

One night the old man sensed that a Windigo was coming to kill his family. But the old man decided that he would kill the Windigo before the Windigo killed his family. The old man has a pouch filled with different things that would give him strength against the Windigo.

So, the old man got his son-in-law, and they walked to a hill where there were two big trees. The old man told his son-in-law to climb the tree and watch for the Windigo. He also told the young man not to climb down the tree because the old man's pouch would only help him and not anyone else.

"I will fight with the Windigo, and before the sun rises I will have it in the fire," said the old man to his son-in-law.

So, the old man built a big fire beside one of the trees, and waited until his son-in-law saw the Windigo coming.

Then, the old man met the Windigo and wrestled with it all night, while the young man stayed in the tree. Then, just as the sun was about to appear on the horizon, the old man beat the Windigo and threw its body into the fire. The flames of the fire instantly engulfed the Windigo's body, and shriveled it to a tiny bit of ash.

**Legends by – Laurence Commanda  
[1918-1979]**

**Legend – 1**

There were huge eagles at one time, much bigger than the ones of today.

There was one which had a nest on a big hill near Chapleau. My father went there, but did not find anything. So, he talked to the Indians that lived there, and they told him that at one time no one would cross the lake because they were scared that this giant bird would fly down and grab them.

The Indians of that area also told my father of how their forefathers, in winter, would find tracks of deer which would suddenly end out on the lake. Around these tracks would be found markings in the snow from the great eagles' wings. What happened was, the giant eagle would swoop down and grab deer as they crossed the frozen lake.

**Legend – 2**

The muskrat was the one who was supposed to have created the earth.

There was a great flood. It rained for many days, until all the dry land began to sink. Nanibush, a legendary figure who dominated Indian life, built a raft and put all the animals on it.

When it finally stopped raining, the earth was covered with water. So, with all the animals on the raft, Nanibush looked about and wondered how deep the water was. So, he sent the beaver into the water to find the bottom. The beaver went down for a long time, then finally returned and told Nanibush that it could not find the bottom. So Nanibush sent other animals down, and they too could not find the bottom. Finally, Nanibush sent the muskrat down. When the muskrat returned, it brought it mud from the bottom.

Nanibush took the mud from the muskrat and blew it onto the water. Soon the mud started to collect, and from this the land began to grow. The land continued to grow and grow until finally the raft settled on dry land.

When Nanibush set the animals free, the animals made tracks all over the land. These tracks formed into little lakes, then, Nanibush got off the raft. First, he stepped to the west, and to the south, and finally to the east. Then Nanibush walked to a river, now known as the St. Lawrence River.

If you look at a map of the Great Lakes, you will see that they look like moccasin tracks.

**Legend – 3**

Many years ago, far back in history, there was a man by the name of Nanibush who was a magician, wise man, and trickster. At one time, in his long life, he lived with his grandmother on the lower end of Lake Superior, where the water runs out.

On one particular day, Nanibush and his grandmother were chasing a beaver on the northern side of the lake. Eventually, they managed to corner the beaver in its lodge. At this Nanibush told his grandmother to sit on one side of the beaver lodge while he waited on the other side. When this was done, Nanibush began to dig into the wall of the beaver lodge. Nanibush grabbed his spear and threw it at the beaver, but he missed it, hitting instead the wall of the beaver lodge. Then, where the spear had hit the lodge, chunks of mud began to fall into the water. The chunks floated with the current out of Lake Superior, through Lake Huron, down the Saint Claire River, across Lake Saint Claire, and across Lakes Erie and Ontario, until it eventually settles on a shallow part of the Saint Lawrence River.

Gradually, as more and more mud settled and collected there, islands began to form. We speak of this, today, as the birth of the Thousand Islands.

#### **Legend – 4**

A great many years ago, a large group of Iroquois ventured into the Lake Nipissing area. Upon reaching the lake, the group decided (Possible because of some internal dispute) to split into two separate bands; one remaining to settle on the mainland, while the other traveled out onto the lake to settle on the islands known today as the Manitous.

For the island band, living on the Manitous was alright for most of the summer and autumn months. What little in the way of food that was offered by the islands was more than supplemented by the plentiful fish catches from the lake. But then, winter struck and fishing became very poor. Soon, the little band's food supplies began to dwindle, and shortly afterwards famine swept through the tiny islands.

As yet, unwilling to return to the main land and the main band of Iroquois, the little band decided to remain on the islands. When the little band decided to remain on the islands, a famine struck, and the band resorted to the only method of fighting the famine they knew of; song magical medicine ... known today as witchcraft.

Since the band was without a medicine man, an eleven-year-old girl was selected to acquire these powers, the "witching powers." But, in order for her to acquire these powers, the little girl had to fast for twenty-two days, isolated from the rest of her band. And so, the little girl was taken to an isolated spot on one of the islands, given a small shelter to live in, and left to begin her ordeal.

As the cold winter days went by, the little girl received daily visits from her sister and brothers. But one day, they did not show up, and later that same day, she began to hear moaning. At this, the little girl decided to go back to the camp of her people.

As she drew near the camp, the little girl found depressions in the snow, which all led to a water hole. When she arrived at the camp, she went to her families' lodge and peered in. The little girl's eyes were met with great shock as she started at the far corner of the room. There, in the corner, lay her father. The upper part of his body was intact, but the lower half was in the form of a snake. When the little girl's father saw her, he cried out to her to go to the mouth of the Sturgeon River and tell the other band what she had seen.

"No one will ever be able to live here because it is cursed", he cried.

Then, the little girl's father told her to get away as fast as possible, because he feared that her sister and brother, who had been turned entirely into snakes, might eat her.

So, the little girl fled to the mouth of the Sturgeon River and told the Iroquois villagers of the experience. The next morning, a group of villagers set out to the islands. When they reached the encampment. The villagers found much of the little girl's word to be true. Only deep depressions in the snow could be found. These depressions led to the water hole on the island of the encampment.

The Iroquois villagers figured, from what had happened, the people of the camp must have caught a sturgeon from the water hole and ate it, without knowing until it was too late that the islands they were on were cursed.

Thus, the campers, because they had eaten a sturgeon from the cursed islands, were changed into snakes (which are long, narrow, and scaly, like sturgeon).