

Elder's Profile: Fraser Commanda

June 1994 – On August 9, 1922, at Sparrow Lake, west of Gravenhurst, Fraser Commanda was the third child born to Xavier Frank Commanda of Nipissing and Procilla Snake of Rama.

Fraser has six brothers and one sister. Sam Snake was his grandfather. George Snake was the oldest, followed by Lawrence, Fraser, Art, Lila, Morgan, and Nelson. Those remaining are two of Fraser's brothers, Murdock, who lives in Orillia and Nelson, in Temagami.

Fraser's family lived at Sparrow Lake in the summer and Rama in the winter months. His dad was a guide and worked at Longford Mill.

Fraser, his brothers, and his sister attended a two-room schoolhouse in Rama. One room for seniors, Fraser recalls, and the other, for juniors.

They moved to Nipissing reserve in 1930. Their home was situated in Duchesnay, where Fred Couchie's house stands today. After they moved to Duchesnay, they had to walk three miles to get to school; Harvey Street school, then Worthington Street School, both located in North Bay. When Fraser was approximately 14 years of age, he went to work for Johnny Restoule. Fraser lived in Dokis for nine years. He worked in the bush, logging, and at times, he went guiding.

Fraser later married and had four daughters: Diane, Gloria, and Joyce, who reside on Nipissing reserve, as well as Janet, who lives in Nova Scotia, but plans to move home to Nipissing in four years. Janet and Joyce are twins.

When Fraser moved from this area, he went to Toronto, where he found work in a body work repair shop. He was employed there for two years until he moved on to Orillia, where he continued with his trade in body work repair. Fraser now lives at the Seniors Complex in Garden Village. Fraser has five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Fraser Commanda

Thank you, Fraser, for sharing with us.

Meegwetch
Liz Stevens