

Island Falls, Saskatchewan: 1929 - 1967

INTRODUCTION

You can find *Island Falls* on the map of Saskatchewan at 55.5° N, 102.4° W, about sixty miles by airplane north of Flin Flon, Manitoba, just west of the Manitoba border. Nowadays it is the name of a SaskPower hydro electric power station.

However, the *Island Falls* to which this website is dedicated was a small settlement of about two hundred people serving the power plant. Located on a man-made island in the Churchill River near the power plant, the settlement was called "The Camp" by its residents, the families of the operators, electricians, machinists, administrators, labourers, and men of many other skills employed by the CRP Co. (Churchill River Power Company), a subsidiary of the HBM&S Co. (Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company).

The *Island Falls* power plant was built between 1928 and 1930 to provide electricity for the HBM&S copper and zinc mining and smelting operation in Flin Flon. Thirty-seven years later, when technology permitted the power plant to be run by remote control, management decided the residential settlement was no longer needed. As a result of "Automation" in 1967, *Island Falls* employees and their families moved to positions in Flin Flon or into retirement.

Afterwards, the company houses, which were very modern for their time, remained vacant but intact until the winter of 1971 when the electricity that heated them was interrupted. Water pipes froze and split, and the houses were subsequently flooded and badly damaged. In the following years, almost all the buildings were removed or demolished. Eventually, the power plant was taken over by SaskPower in 1981.

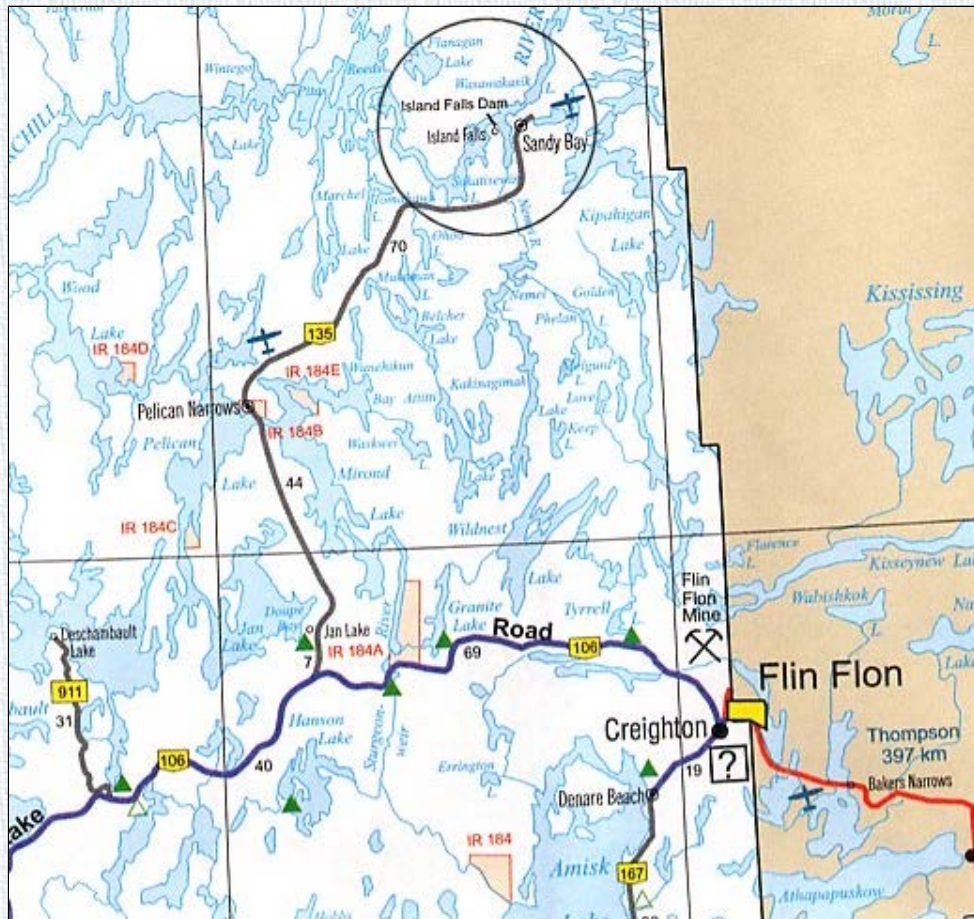
For many of us, our *Island Falls* home truly disappeared in 1988 when authorities dismantled the Community Hall which had been the social centre of The Camp and the setting of many of our fondest memories. Except for the two-storey commissary (now a staff house), all that remains are the sidewalks leading to the places where houses once stood.

The settlement of *Island Falls* has thus come and gone. From an historical viewpoint, it had a brief existence compared to the ancient and on-going presence of the First Nations people along the Churchill River. In recognition of their status, we have added a page dedicated to the people of Sandy Bay.

This website consists mainly of photographs and material collected from individuals, Saskatchewan government agencies (1), and the *Northern Lights Magazine*. Because the *Northern Lights* did not begin publication until 1941, the first eleven years of community life at *Island Falls* are not well documented. (2)

[Click here to view the Main Website.](#)

Although few of the adults who lived and worked at *Island Falls* are still alive, their many descendants, including myself, are scattered across Canada. It is hoped that they will continue to provide additional material for these



pages.

My thanks to the following people for contributing to this history project:

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2. ... except for Helen Davis Evans' 1995 book, *Camp: North of 55°*, a collection of stories and photographs about the R.W. Davis family and the people of Island Falls. Copies of this book are still available at 50% of the original price.

Donations

My thanks to the following people who have given money in support of the Island Falls website. The names are listed in the order received.

- **Diane Evans Jensen**
- **Richard Davis**
- **Bob and Eleanor Tanner**
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YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Island Falls, Saskatchewan: 1929 - 1967 has been a costly personal project and remains an on-going expense. To help keep this website on the Internet, donations are requested. Please send a cheque or money order to:
Dave Rutherford, 3976 Latimer Street, Abbotsford, BC V2S 7K7



Or donate via PayPal (no account necessary):



Background



Island Falls, Saskatchewan: 1929 - 1967 is the creation of Dave Rutherford of Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada and funded, in part, by the estate of **Helen Davis Evans** and other private donors. It first went online March 12, 2002 and is now hosted by *InternetHosting.com* in Mississauga, ON.



The aerial photo of the Power Plant on our Front page, with the communities of Island Falls and Sandy Bay in the background, first appeared on the cover of the Island Falls 1964 New Years Banquet menu. It was originally a Kodak slide taken in 1963 by **Keith Olson** from an airplane piloted by **Lowell Christensen**. The airplane, a Cessna 140, belonged to Harold Jacobson of Whitesand.



Our CRP logo is based on a design painted on the bows of canoes built for the Churchill River Power Company by **Bill Grayson**. The stencil for the logo, about a foot in diameter, could be seen hanging from a nail on the wall of Bill's boat shop.



Digital copies of many of the photographs seen on this Website are available in higher quality and larger format, without watermarks, for private, non-commercial use. Send your request to:

drutherford@islandfalls.ca



Our New Guestbook was programmed by Klemen Stirn of PHP Junkyard.